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LD181423 [Editorial Report]

Iran-Iraq Conflict

Iranian Advance in North—Iranian forces entered the Iraqi border town of Halabjah 17 March and "completely demolished" a division of Iraq's I Army Corps, IRNA announced. Iranian troops subsequently captured several areas east of Halabjah, including the western Iranian border town of Nowsud, which had been under Iraqi control since 1980 and had been used as a base for "counterrevolutionary" groups, IRNA said.

A related communique broadcast by Tehran radio stated that the capture of Halabjah brought total Iraqi losses during "Val-Fajr-10" to 8,000 killed and over 3,400 captured. Over 100 villages and 800 sq km of territory had been "liberated."

The IRGC has used captured T-72 tanks in the fighting against Iraqi armored units, according to an Iranian officer cited by IRNA. The agency also claimed that Iraqi chemical bombings 16 March killed "some 4,000" residents of Halabjah.

Meanwhile, in a message to fighters broadcast by Tehran radio, Majlis Speaker 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani urged Iranian troops to show "kindness and mercy" to the "tens of thousands" of Iraqi civilians who are now under Iranian control.

Missile, Air, Naval Attacks—Iraq fired seven missiles at Tehran 18 March, six of them in a simultaneous strike aimed at turning the city into an "inferno," according to military statements broadcast by Voice of the Masses radio.

Other statements carried by the radio reported 22 Iraqi air strikes on Iranian cities between 2055 GMT 16 March and 0630 GMT 18 March, as well as raids on two maritime targets in the Gulf. The targets included Shiraz, Bakhtaran, Dezful, Ilam, and Jaysan, all of which were hit several times. IRNA reported that at least 10 Iranians were killed in air attacks on 17 March.

Iran likewise continued its bombardment of Iraq, launching 48 medium-range missiles at Basra and other Iraqi border towns 17-18 March, according to IRNA. The agency also reported Iranian air strikes on Irbil and Mosul, and INA stated that Iranian air attacks caused civilian casualties.

A military spokesman cited by INA also announced that an Iranian plane was downed over Iraq and denied that any Iraqi aircraft were downed by the Iranians 17 March. In contrast, an Iranian war communique cited by IRNA asserted that six Iraqi warplanes were downed 16-17 March, and the agency subsequently announced that three more Iraqi planes were downed in dogfights with Iranian jets over the Gulf 18 March.

In another Gulf development, "speedboats" fired missiles at a Japanese-chartered liquefied gas tanker off the Dubayy coast 18 March, killing a Japanese cargo supervisor and wounding nine of the South Korean crew, AFP reported.

A Norwegian tanker was later attacked by an Iranian speedboat in the Strait of Hormuz, but no one was hurt, the agency added. Both vessels were set on fire in the raids. While AFP's sources did not identify the source of the first attack, KYODO confirmed that "Iranian forces" were responsible.

Iran on UNSC Statement—A 17 March statement on the Iran-Iraq conflict by the president of the UN Security Council was "very weak," the Iranian Foreign Ministry asserted in a statement broadcast by Tehran radio.

The Foreign Ministry urged the Security Council to condemn Iraq for having started "the new round of its crimes," reaffirming Iran's readiness to end retaliatory attacks as soon as Iraq stops attacking Iranian cities.

Afghanistan

The Soviet Union will withdraw its troops from Afghanistan "in some other way" if there is no international settlement within the framework of the Geneva talks, a Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman announced in a statement cited by TASS.

The manner of such a withdrawal would be agreed between the Soviet and Afghan governments, he indicated. Nevertheless, the spokesman reaffirmed the USSR's desire to attain an international settlement, and he reiterated accusations that Pakistan and the United States are blocking progress at the Geneva talks.

In Geneva, Afghan Foreign Minister 'Abdul Wakil stated that "to whatever extent the Pakistani side delays the signing of the agreements, then to that extent the return of the limited contingents of the Soviet Union will be delayed."

Speaking at a press conference carried by Kabul radio, Wakil also accused Pakistan of seeking to "artificially complicate" the Geneva talks by raising border issues, something which is "outside the agenda." On the question of a coalition government, Wakil reaffirmed his side's refusal to accept a government formed in Pakistan and "exported" to Afghanistan, but he said the authorities in Kabul are ready to talk to opposition leaders "anywhere and at any level" on the formation of a coalition.

He indicated that the government attaches greater value to contacts with rebel commanders inside Afghanistan than with the leaders based in Pakistan.

In Peshawar, mujahidin alliance leader Gulbuddin Hikmatyar told a news conference of his intention to finalize a mujahidin government and establish it inside Afghanistan "very soon," AFP reported. He reaffirmed the mujahidin's unwillingness share power with communists and said the Soviet forces must take their "stooges" with them.

Inside Afghanistan, Kabul radio listed the names of 40 people appointed to a Central Commission for the convocation of National Assembly elections. The radio added that 10 seats have been reserved for opposition representatives.

Israel

A military court convicted two IDF soldiers of improper conduct for having partially buried alive four Arabs last month, Jerusalem radio reported. One soldier received a prison term of 2 and 1/2 months while the other was given 2 months.

As for measures against Palestinians, the IDF spokesman announced that the deputy chairman of the Gaza Bar Association has been placed under administrative detention for 6 months on suspicion of having engaged in "subversive hostile activities," according to the radio.

The IDF has also arrested "dozens" of "inciters" in the territories prior to the Palestinian "Land Day" on 30 March, the radio disclosed.

On the security situation, Jerusalem radio reported that a curfew was imposed on the Jabalyah refugee camp in the Gaza Strip after an Israeli civilian was shot and wounded by gunmen in the area. In further reportage on the violence in the territories 16 March, THE JERUSALEM POST stated that four Palestinians died in the Tulkarm area.

In Lebanon, the DFLP threatened to retaliate inside Israel for the 17 March air attack on targets near Beirut, acknowledging that a DFLP base in 'Aynab received a direct hit in the Israeli strike, according to Voice of Lebanon radio.

Inter-Arab Affairs

Quorum for Summit—The quorum for the convocation of an emergency Arab summit meeting has been reached following Tunisia's announcement that it is willing to attend, KUNA reported. The call for a summit is thus far supported by Algeria, the YAR, the PDRY, Syria, Sudan, Libya, Kuwait, Djibouti, Saudi Arabia, and the PLO.

Arab League sources cited by the agency disclosed that the Arab League secretary general will now begin consultations aimed at fixing a date and venue, adding that the most likely hosts for the conference are Algeria, Tunisia, or Saudi Arabia.

Diplomatic Contacts—Jordanian King Husayn held talks with the YAR president in Sanaa 17 March, Amman radio noted.

In Tunis, PLO Executive Committee Chairman Yasir 'Arafat met with Usamah al-Baz, the director of Egyptian President Husni Mubarak's political office, MENA revealed. Fatah officials Salah Khalaf, Mahmud 'Abbas, and Hani al-Hasan also attended the talks, during which current peace efforts were reviewed.

'Arafat subsequently arrived in Cairo to attend the funeral of his brother, Mustafa, MENA reported.

PLO Criticism of Arabs—A Baghdad Voice of the PLO radio commentary lambasted the Arabs for failing to adopt a united policy against the Shultz initiative, adding that the "friendly reception" given to the secretary of state and other U.S. envoys in some Arab capitals raises many "bitter questions."

Inter-Arab Affairs

Quorum Reached for Emergency Arab Summit

LD171146 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 0951 GMT 17 Mar 88

[Text] Tunis, 17 March (KUNA)—A quorum for the convocation of an emergency Arab summit was reached with Tunisia's announcement last night that it had agreed to attend the meeting called for by Algeria.

Informed sources at the Arab League told KUNA here today that Secretary General Chedli Klibi now will begin consultations with the members in order to fix the date and the venue of the Arab summit.

The sources indicated that three countries were the likely hosts for such a summit: Algeria, which called for its convocation; Tunisia, where the Arab League is headquartered; and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in its capacity as the state due to host the forthcoming ordinary Arab summit.

So far, the call to convene the emergency Arab summit has received a favorable response from Algeria, the Yemen Arab Republic, the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, Syria, Sudan, Libya, Kuwait, Djibouti, Saudi Arabia, and the PLO.

It is worth recalling that the call was made by President Chadli Bendjedid of Algeria, with a view to supporting the popular uprising in the occupied territories.

Islamic Affairs

Iran To Attend Amman Islamic Conference

JN171805 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1715 GMT 17 Mar 88

[Randa Habib dispatch from Amman]

[Excerpts] Iran has joined the countries that will attend the 17th Islamic foreign ministers conference, which will open in Amman on Monday. This means there will be 45 states participating; these are all the ICO member states except Afghanistan, whose membership was suspended in 1985.

A source close to the conference said the Islamic Republic of Iran today informed the appropriate quarters of its intention to participate, thus ending speculations that it will not come to Jordan. Iran had earlier boycotted the ICO summit in Kuwait in January 1987.

The same source stated that the Iranian delegation will not be on the level of Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati. [passage omitted]

Jordanian King Husayn will inaugurate the 4-day conference.

ICO's Pirzada Discusses Conference Agenda

JN171546 Amman PETRA-JNA in Arabic 1430 GMT 17 Mar 88

[Excerpts] Amman, 17 Mar (PETRA)—ICO Secretary General Sharifuddin Pirzada has said that the 17th conference of Islamic foreign ministers, which will begin its meetings in Amman on Monday [21 March], will be convened with the Islamic nation facing delicate circumstances.

This nation is in dire need of settling its differences, unifying its stands, and restoring its solidarity so it can collectively confront the challenges facing it.

Pirzada added that one of the most prominent challenges facing the Islamic nation is the fierce Zionist onslaught against the Palestinian people, as well as the conspiracies being hatched by Israel and its allies against this people and their sole legitimate representative, the PLO.

He pointed out that the Amman conference will discuss ways to guarantee the realization of the Palestinian people's legitimate rights and support their blessed uprising, which has entered its 4th month. He added that the conferees will also discuss methods of exerting pressure to bring about the convening of an international Mideast peace conference, with the participation of all concerned parties, including the PLO, which must participate in this conference on an equal footing with other parties.

This information was revealed in a press statement made by Pirzada upon his arrival in Amman today. Pirzada arrived in Amman at the head of a delegation of the ICO General Secretariat to prepare for and participate in the 17th conference of Islamic foreign ministers. [passage omitted]

Pirzada indicated that the issues of Palestine, the Middle East, and holy Jerusalem will figure highly on the conference agenda which includes 78 items, including the Iraq-Iran war. This war has recently witnessed a dangerous escalation, which dictates that the Islamic nation must expedite efforts to find a just and honorable solution to end it.

He added that the conference will also discuss the situation in Afghanistan and the negotiations currently under way, under UN auspices, to reach a political solution. This solution should restore the Islamic nature and nonaligned status of Afghanistan, ensure the return of millions of refugees to their homeland in honor and dignity, and grant the Muslim Afghan people the right to choose the regime of their liking.

The conferees will also discuss South Africa's apartheid policies and ways to support the independence of Namibia, as well as ways to back the South African people's efforts to regain their rights and end the hateful racial discrimination.

Pirzada went on to say that other important issues on the conference agenda include all forms of international terrorism, Muslims in the southern Philippines, and the status of Muslims in a number of states that are not affiliated with the ICO.

He said the conference will also discuss a number of conflicts plaguing the Islamic nation. The conferees, he added, will also discuss the ties of cooperation between the ICO and regional and international organizations. [passage omitted]

Palestinian Affairs

'Arafat, Egypt's Al-Baz Confer in Tunis

NC171548 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1410 GMT 17 Mar 88

[Excerpt] Tunis, 17 Mar (MENA)—Dr Usamah al-Baz, first under secretary at the Foreign Ministry and director of the President's Office for Political Affairs, has met with PLO Executive Committee Chairman Yasir 'Arafat. They discussed the latest developments in the uprising in the occupied Arab territories and ways to bolster it and reviewed current efforts to achieve peace in the region.

The 4-hour working session, which ended in Tunis early this morning, was attended by a number of Palestinian leaders, including Abu Iyad [Salah Khalaf], Abu Mazin, [Mahmud 'Abbas], Hakim Bal'awi, Hani al-Hasan, and Sa'id Kamal, as well as Egyptian Charge d'Affaires in Tunis Ambassador 'Ali Mahir.

In a statement to a MENA correspondent in Tunis, Dr al-Baz stated that this meeting with the PLO leadership is within the framework of continuing coordination and consultation between Egypt and the PLO on all pan-Arab issues, particularly the Palestinian issue.

He stressed that Egypt supports the Palestinian uprising in the occupied territory, which embodies the Palestinian people's rejection of the Israeli occupation and their determination to liberate their land and determine their future.

He said Egypt believes that the events in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip over the past 4 months and the Israeli authorities' brutal handling of the Palestinian people's revolution against occupation increases doubly the international community's responsibility to establish a just and comprehensive peace that would enable the Palestinian people to live in security and dignity, like other peoples of the region.

Egypt, he said, also believes that the PLO should participate in all peace efforts and play a basic role in negotiations to be held within the framework of an international conference.

Al-Baz went on to say that the starting point for these negotiations should be based on the acceptance of the principle of land for peace and a pledge by Israel to withdraw from all territories occupied since 1967, because peace cannot be established with regional expansion and attempts at domination and hegemony.

He emphasized: "The Israeli people must give a decisive response and determine their stand precisely; otherwise, they will bear the historic responsibility of wasting a good opportunity to achieve a just and comprehensive peace."

Al-Baz added that during the working session there was full agreement of views among Egypt, Jordan, and the PLO over these basic points, while coordination over subsidiary points remains incomplete. Concluding, he noted that he believes the Palestinian leadership is following a positive and constructive course and is genuinely ready to shoulder the responsibilities of peace. [passage omitted]

CUMHURIYET Interviews Faruq Qaddumi

NC150911 Istanbul CUMHURIYET in Turkish 10 Mar 88 pp 1, 13

["Exclusive" interview with PLO Political Bureau chief Faruq Qaddumi by CUMHURIYET correspondent Semih Idiz in Ankara on 9 March]

[Text] [Idiz] During your official talks in Ankara you are reported to have described the present stage of the Palestinian struggle as critical. You are also reported to have said that "historical developments are expected in the future." Can you explain your views?

[Qaddumi] The Palestinian people's uprising is a turning point. It is a historical moment that will create significant changes in the geographical map of the region, which will in turn foil our enemies' aspirations and contribute toward the effort made by the stateless Palestinians to achieve independence.

[Idiz] The Israeli officials are trying to present the incidents in the Gaza Strip and West Bank as not being linked with the PLO. How true is this?

[Qaddumi] It is true that the uprising of our people was spontaneous. Nevertheless, our people have always confirmed that they are represented only by the PLO.

No matter what the Israelis may say, they will not be able to change the realities which have come to light in connection with the uprising. The most important realities are that the PLO represents the Palestinian people and the recent uprising is a new milestone in the Palestinian struggle.

[Idiz] The young Palestinians in the occupied lands are reported to be inclined toward the extremist Islamic trends. Does the PLO fear this development may change the nature of the Palestinian struggle?

[Qaddumi] Most of the Palestinians are Muslim. The leaders of the uprising in 1936 were also Muslim. Yasir 'Arafat, who is our leader, is a religious person who performs his prayers. That is, Islam is within the framework of our resistance; however, this does not mean that the Palestinian struggle is an extremist religious movement.

A deviation from the main cause will not occur because of the religious aspect of the struggle. On the contrary, this aspect will only strengthen the cause. The objective of our resistance is to liberate Palestine. While we may have varying views about the social system that will be set up after we achieve our objective, our struggle is a national movement which is spearheaded by the PLO. It is common knowledge that the PLO itself is made up of various trends and factions.

[Idiz] Although many countries have volunteered to send humanitarian aid to the Palestinians in the occupied lands in the form of food and other material, Israel has accepted only Turkey's offer. Why?

[Qaddumi] Turkey is a country with considerable political weight in the Middle East. It has decided to help the Palestinians in the occupied lands in order to make its support for them known and has been sending food, not arms. Israel's compliance with Turkey's request is an indication of Turkey's weight in the region and points to the important role it can undertake for the establishment of peace.

[Idiz] Do you find the quality of Turkey's support sufficient?

[Qaddumi] If you want to know whether we will ask for more aid from our Turkish brothers, then this is a matter for them to decide. However, the Palestinians are asking for both political and moral support for their cause from the Islamic countries, including Turkey. As far as we are concerned, it is the duty of the Islamic countries to support the resistance of the Palestinian people.

[Idiz] Do you expect Turkey to play a more active role in the Middle East?

[Qaddumi] We believe Turkey can be more active in the support it gives to the resistance of the Palestinian people against occupation and to the Palestinian cause.

[Idiz] Can we regard this as an indirect call to Turkey?

[Qaddumi] I believe Turkey can decide what it has to do. That is not for me to say.

[Idiz] This is my final question. You maintain good relations with the Greek Cypriot Administration. What is your opinion of the Cyprus problem?

[Qaddumi] We support the effort made by the UN secretary general to resolve it. We would support any agreement that could be reached between the two sides of the island and we support all the initiatives aimed at establishing peace and harmony between them.

DFLP's Hawatimah on USSR Role, 'Uprising'

PM161327 London AL-HAWADITH in Arabic 11 Mar 88 p 29

[Interview with DFLP Secretary General Nayif Hawatimah by Zaki Shihab; date, place not given]

[Text] AL-HAWADITH: You happened to be in Moscow during and after Shultz' visit. How do you view the Soviet atmosphere and position?

Hawatimah: The visit was not a coincidence. It was prompted by Soviet and Palestinian necessities in accordance with the Soviet Union's principled stand on Palestinian causes and rights and its position as one of the two superpowers.

We held talks at high levels and we heard assurances about the Soviet Union's commitment to a just and comprehensive settlement that guarantees Israel's withdrawal from the territories occupied in 1967, the Palestinian people's right to repatriation, and the right of self-determination for 5 million Palestinians.

We were told that the political body to consider and find a solution must be an international conference attended by all parties, including the PLO, under the supervision of the United Nations and the five permanent members of the Security Council.

AL-HAWADITH: At the meeting of the Jordanian-Palestinian joint committee in Amman, Jordanian Prime Minister Zayd al-Rifa'i told Mahmud 'Abbas (Abu Mazin), head of the Palestinian delegation, that the Soviet Union advocates a Jordanian-Palestinian joint delegation.

Hawatimah: In the joint statement issued at the end of the DFLP delegation's visit, the Soviet position was clear and firm in this respect. It underscored independent PLO representation on equal footing with the other parties.

The Soviet officials base their position on the fact that the Palestinian question cannot be settled without the PLO. They have said that the international conference should be an effective conference, not a mere formality, and that means, in their view, that issues committees, not geographical committees, should be formed between the Arab side and the Zionist entity.

AL-HAWADITH: What did Shultz take to Moscow, and on what did his talks focus?

Hawatimah: He took solutions in stages, which were categorically and firmly rejected. Shultz told the Soviet officials: "The U.S. Administration has Arab and Israeli approval for a U.S. plan to settle the conflict in two stages."

The first stage: Bilateral negotiations begin between Israel and Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon. The Palestinian side will be represented by Palestinian figures acceptable to Israel and Washington. The aim of the negotiations will to find solutions within 6 months beginning next May and ending in December.

During that interim period it should be agreed that the Israeli forces would leave the towns and village and would be replaced by Jordanian security forces, but the Israeli forces would stay in the perimeters of the towns and camps. The Zionist entity would be responsible for military and strategic affairs.

The second stage begins early in 1989 with the participation of the permanent members [of the Security Council] and Egypt.

After the opening session of the international conference, the formation of geographical committees from Israel and each Arab state will begin. The Palestinians will be represented as part of the Jordanian delegation. The talks could continue for 2 to 3 years.

The current U.S. Administration will guarantee that the new administration which takes over in January will take an interest and carry on with the second phase, during which it will be determined who should have political sovereignty over the occupied Arab territories.

What Secretary Shultz said did not give the impression that this sovereignty would go to Jordan or any other Arab country, but he made it clear that it would not go to the Palestinian people. The Soviets rejected the plan and that is why the White House described their position as ambiguous and unrealistic.

During their meeting, Soviet leader Gorbachev told the U.S. secretary: "The U.S. policy in the Middle East is still based on conflict and confrontation and has been so for the last 40 years, and it still refuses to discuss a meeting of interests of all parties in the Middle East.

For its part, Moscow is prepared to discuss solutions for the regional hotbeds of tension, especially the Middle East, which is adjacent to the southern borders of the Soviet Union, on the basis of withdrawal to the 4 June 1967 lines and a guarantee of the Palestinian people's rights to self-determination and to their own independent state."

Because of this Soviet stand, the Middle East question will be raised again at the meeting to be held between Shevardnadze and Shultz at the end of March in Washington

AL-HAWADITH: Last week you met with Algerian President Chadli Bendjedid. What about his efforts to convene an Arab summit conference to discuss ways of supporting the uprising?

Hawatimah: The Algerian leadership is pained and saddened by the fact that there is no unified Arab stand in aid of the uprising. I have learned that the Algerian Government has asked [Arab League Secretary General] Chedli Klibi to raise with the Arab states the question of calling an emergency Arab summit conference that would be a conference of practical, material, and political measures and steps, not a conference of slogans and politics that ends with a statement.

The Algerian leadership has expressed willingness to make every possible effort to bring about such a summit conference in Riyadh or in Tunis in its capacity as the Arab League headquarters and even to host such a conference in Algeria because the Palestinian people's uprising, which is approaching its 4th month, deserves a unified Arab stand that surpasses verbal praise or silence.

AL-HAWADITH: According to some reports from the occupied Arab territories, the families of most martyrs who fell in the uprising have not received the necessary aid. Why is that?

Hawatimah: Quite frankly the Palestinian leadership, consisting of all the leaders and factions of the Palestinian revolution, the Executive Committee, and the higher committee of the occupied homeland, is continuing its meetings.

It is regrettable that the uprising fund created by an Arab foreign ministers decision on 24 January in Tunis is still just ink on paper awaiting the arrival of the promised aid.

AL-HAWADITH: Why does the PLO not pay out of its own national fund at this stage?

Hawatimah: We are not holding back. Within the confines of the PLO's means, all kinds of initial aid is being provided from the PLO's national fund. This is being done through the cooperation of several international establishments attached to the United Nations.

The Zionist enemy does not permit aid to reach the social bodies and institutions through the PLO or Arab states. Therefore, the only remaining channel is the UN establishments such as UNRWA and other bodies which operate in the occupied territories. Also, the PLO has its own special ways which we cannot reveal.

AL-HAWADITH: But the question on everyone's mind is: How long will the stone uprising last and is there any intention of developing its struggle?

Hawatimah: The Unified National Command in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, which cooperates with representatives of our people in the 1948 territory, has all the powers to continue and develop the uprising step by step and to safeguard it against two dangers: the danger of a defeatist spirit and the attempts to abort it by the defeatist trend which raises the slogan "3 months is enough"; and the danger of the adventurist trend which wants to plunge the uprising into a process of accelerating steps that would burn out the phased approach until the uprising is broken with a series of adventures.

The Unified National Command is very well aware of these two dangers and that is why it leads the uprising and operational tactics with strikes and demonstrations, defining the tasks of every area, quarter, and camp in a spirit of realism and unity that guarantees the unity of all popular sectors in the arena and guarantees development of the uprising step by step, away from any adventurous and unrealistic inclination.

Now the uprising covers every corner of occupied Palestine and is completing its organizational structure from the top down to the base with thousands of popular, national, and strike committees which spread out horizontally to direct every move in the field.

Call No 9, issued last week, laid down a program for the uprising until 9 March following the implementation of Call No 8, which raised the slogan "no to Shultz visit and U.S. plans."

Call No 9 says that the uprising's Unified Command will continue to develop and expand the general uprising until it completes all its tasks for this phase before moving on to the greater phase of general national disobedience.

That is why the Unified Command has emphasized that 30 March, which marks Land Day, will witness a sweeping wave of popular action against the occupation as a show of the determination of 2 million people to cling to their land and stand against settlements. That day will be a major step in the shift to the higher phase in the people's uprising and the stone revolution.

PNC Speaker Views Unrest, Conference Question

PM171401 London AL-TADAMUN in Arabic
12 Mar 88 pp 14, 15

[Interview with PNC Speaker Shaykh 'Abd al-Hamid al-Sa'ih by Rashid Khashanah in Tunis; date not given]

[Excerpts] [Khashanah] Does Your Eminence view the uprising as providing the right conditions to promote the present aim of convening an international conference as a preamble to setting up a Palestinian state?

[Al-Sa'ih] Yes, most certainly! This uprising has started to keep the world from sleeping and has let it know there is a nation that has gone to the point of risking their women, children, and elderly for the sake of securing what they want, in other words, a dignified humane life.

Why were the international organizations created? They were created to prevent evil, stop war, and take us to a stage of peace. This region cannot enjoy a true, just, and comprehensive peace until the Arab Palestinian people enjoy their rights as others do.

These developments have started even to worry the United States, which sides with Israel in all its actions. The way to achieve the Palestinians' rights in the present international circumstances is through an effective international conference with powers in which the Security Council's five permanent members and all the other related states and organizations, including the PLO as the Palestinian people's sole legitimate representative, are represented

[Khashanah] Is the reception of Fayiz Abu Rahmah and Hanna Sinyurah by Shultz in Washington last January a step toward U.S. recognition of the PLO?

[Al-Sa'ih] I believe that the U.S. contacts with Hanna Sinyurah and Fayiz Abu Rahmah constitute a U.S. attempt to achieve a situation in which Palestinians agree to speak with the United States or anyone else to the exclusion of the PLO.

These attempts were previously made in the British and U.S. Consulates in Jerusalem. They chose the Palestinian figures who suited them. According to them we are all terrorists, so all the Palestinians must be imprisoned—that is illogical; whereas we realize according to our traditions, experience, and convictions that terrorism is violence and violence breeds more violence.

But there is a difference between my initiating violence and my being attacked and repulsing the aggression. Repulsing aggression is not terrorism but legitimate defense against the oppression which has afflicted this nation.

[Khashanah] The uprising has bred conflicts among the Israelis, between those advocating an international conference headed by Peres and the rejectionists headed by Shamir. Who, in your appraisal, will gain the upper hand?

[Al-Sa'ih] Disputes exist between Likud and Labor on the surface, but we are not convinced that genuine conflicts exist; it is instead an exchange of the roles distributed between the two.

We believe they think in the same vein and do not depart from a common aim, which for all of them is to seize this homeland from the Palestinian people and prevent them from building their own state and determining their own destiny.

[Khashanah] Do you think the settlement proposed by Peres to Jordanize the West Bank could be raised in the forthcoming stage as a way out of the present situation, with U.S. support?

[Al-Sa'ih] We do not consider Peres' settlement or any other of the plans a real settlement of our case. What we want is to possess a homeland in which to set up our state. This is the only settlement which will satisfy the Palestinian people. [passage omitted]

[Khashanah] Ideas are currently being put forward to prepare the ground for a settlement such as the idea of setting up a government-in-exile—which a legal committee has been charged with the task of investigating...

[Al-Sa'ih, interrupting] The idea of a Palestinian Government has not been raised by circles with any right to raise such a matter. This idea has been talkedn about by people for a long time.

Some of the Arab states proposed long ago the formation of a government-in-exile, on the basis that the international community—in other words, the United States—used to say, in order to please world Zionism, that it had no dealings with the PLO because the PLO was revolutionary and terrorist, whereas reality has proved that the PLO does not follow the course of terrorism but stands against it, as we stated in the Cairo Declaration.

What we undertake is dictated to us by our duty to resist occupation and under Article 51 of the UN Charter all nations have the right to adopt the means they see as correct to safeguard their rights in resisting oppression and aggression—unless requesting our rights and resisting aggression against us is regarded as terrorism. [passage omitted]

[Khashanah] Following the PNC's recent reunification session, some organizations refrained from participating in the Executive Committee and it was hoped the dialogue would continue with them after the PNC meeting and bridges would be built between then and the organizations that participated. Has there been any progress in this area?

[Al-Sa'ih] The organizations residing in Damascus are still represented on the PNC, the Palestinian Central Council, and the Executive Committee. So far they still have their seats, which they can take up to carry out their tasks, as the PFLP as well as the DFLP and the Communist Party have done by entering the Executive Committee.

Some of the organizations which remain have certain elements. We do not want to downgrade them: Instead we are seeking to ensure that every Palestinian carries out a definite task—no matter how small—for the sake of the revolution and thr fulfillment of its aspirations.

We call him to come to us to take his seat on the PNC and in the legitimate organizations and to work together. This organization is an organization for all Palestinians, inside or outside the homeland, in Syria, or abroad.

[Khashanah] This is the last PNC session and a new council has to be elected. Has the PNC speaker's office started to think about choosing members for the next council, especially since the method of election is not possible in the circumstances of dispersion which the Palestinian people are going through?

[Al-Sa'ih] That's true, we are thinking of forming a new PNC, but the uprising is taking precedence over all the other priorities and preoccupations. Afterward, formulas for choosing PNC members and forming a new PNC will definitely be discussed.

PFLP Official on Syrian Detention of Colleague

PM171519 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 14 Mar 88 p 2

[Unattributed report: "Palestinian Contacts With Damascus To Release Salah"]

[Text] London, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT—Abu 'Ali Mustafa, PLO Executive Committee member and PFLP deputy assistant secretary general, expressed his astonishment at the Syrian security organs' detention of Salah Salah, PFLP Political Bureau member and chairman of the National Action Committee comprising all factions under the PLO.

In a telephone interview with AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT, Abu 'Ali Mustafa said the PLO was surprised by the measure at a time when efforts are being made to mend relations with Syria.

He pointed out that "the PFLP and the various Palestinian factions have contacted the Syrian authorities concerned, but by yesterday afternoon there was still no explanation and we fear that the purpose of this behavior is to block any rectification in relations between the two sides"

He described the detention decision as a political decision and not just a slip-up by a responsible officer.

Moreover, he said the PLO Executive Committee will meet this week to discuss the U.S. measure to close the PLO's diplomatic mission, the ongoing Arab contacts to convene an Arab summit to discuss the situation in the occupied territories, and ways of assisting the people's continuing uprising.

Furthermore, the position on the proposed settlements and ways of continuing to support our steadfast people will be discussed. He thought it unlikely that Yasir 'Arafat would visit Jordan before the Executive Committee's conclusion of its scheduled meetings.

Commentary Views 'General Arab Hesitation'
JN172157 Baghdad Voice of the PLO in Arabic 1747 GMT 17 Mar 88

[Station commentary: "The Imminent Uprising Summit"]

[Text] The sweeping national uprising by our heroic Palestinian people is approaching its 100th day, displaying further firmness and determination to achieve its great objective of ending the occupation and wresting freedom and independence.

For more than 3 months, our valiant people have been waging real battles and confronting the Zionist machine of repression, killing, and aggression using stones, patriotic chants, and the hoisting of the Palestinian flag.

They have been moving to entrench the confrontation and expand the arena of clashes and resistance so it will include the entire area of the occupied homeland.

For more than 3 months, our people have been leading their independence battle with all the resolve, determination, faith, and firmness they possess. They have been displaying unprecedented generosity. Our people have been making grave sacrifices with their sons' blood, their livelihood, and the suffering that they have sustained—suffering that is beyond man's ability to endure.

For more than 3 months, our people have been escalating their heroic performance in the hope that this performance is, with its vital pulse, bound to reach into their Arab depth. This would cause this depth to explode, bringing about offerings that harmonize with the heroic performance being displayed by our people in their great uprising.

Our heroic people, while escalating their great militant performance, are only trying to bridge the gap between the motionlessness of the Arabs and the motion of the Palestinians—motion which is being activated with a high degree of effectiveness—to achieve the required integration and desired momentum.

This is sought in order to make the uprising appear as a militant Arab action in the full sense of the word. However, the general Arab action has remained motionless and continued to move in remote circles. The Arabs have remained incapable of doing anything tangible or practical to support and develop the uprising.

That is, if we choose not to talk about those parties that have so far continued to initiate moves in the opposite direction, through favorably responding to the frenzied U.S. maneuvers which only seek to contain and abort the uprising, it may be necessary for the national independence battle, which is being currently waged by our people in all firmness and strength, to identify these Arab parties which are responding favorably to U.S. plans as adversaries to clarify matters and expose these parties. Then, our talk will acquire different significance.

In this context, we would like to provide an important detail and say we may choose to understand that some Arab parties will fail to support us. However, what we can neither understand, accept, nor succumb to is to see some Arab parties persist in being our adversaries.

It is time of the uprising and the uprising decision is clear, obvious, and decisive. There will be no stopping the uprising before victory is achieved and there will be no hesitation to escalate the heroic performance until its effects are felt in the Arab depth.

Now, there is a chance for the Arab states to meet within the framework of their first legitimate institutions, the Arab summit. The chance created by the Palestinian uprising is a historic one according to all standards. A new spirit and new standards for managing the conflict have emerged.

Great givens and variables are being brought about by the uprising and these are bound to have an effect on the region, whether in the short or long run. The Arabs must seize the opportunity. The Arab summit, if convened to support the uprising program, namely, to support develop, and escalate the uprising more effectively, would open the door wide for the transformation which must come and for securing the harmony which must be brought about by the heroic performance of the uprising—the harmony which must be realized and for which there is no alternative.

The only alternative to this is to see the fires of the uprising spread in all fields if some continue to try to quell these fires while they are bursting in the Israeli field.

Hence, the general Arab hesitation must end. It is no longer logical or acceptable to see it continue. The enemies and adversaries are continuing their frenzied and escalating move to contain the uprising and quell its fires.

In view of this, where are the Arab brothers? Where is their motion which must confront this move? Where is the simple role that they must at least display to prove they are there and to demonstrate the credibility of their support for the Palestine question?

The pressing requirement that is currently required is to see the Arabs employ their weight, interests, and international relations to support the Palestinian independence battle which is being waged by our people using stones.

This can be demonstrated through bringing about a unified Arab political action, through effective material support, and also through spreading the pulse of the uprising in all international arenas and forums. Our Arab brothers must know we are calling on them to participate, alongside our people, in reaping the fruits of their great uprising and to participate in reaping the fruits of victories, the signs of which are being accumulated by our heroic people.

Hence, we call upon them to attend the uprising summit and to support the greatest uprising. Will they respond favorably?

South Asian Regional Affairs

'Abdul Wakil Holds News Conference in Geneva

LD172050 Kabul Domestic Service in Dari 1600 GMT 17 Mar 88

["Full text" of Foreign Minister 'Abdul Wakil's news conference on 16 March in Geneva—read by announcer]

[Text] Esteemed 'Abdul Wakil, foreign affairs minister of the Republic of Afghanistan, who is heading the Afghan delegation at the Afghanistan-Pakistan talks in Geneva, held a news conference yesterday which was attended by more than 100 representatives of the world's mass media.

The full text of the news conference of esteemed 'Abdul Wakil follows:

Respected journalists, in accordance with the 8 February statements by the leaders of Afghanistan and the Soviet Union, the Afghanistan delegation, with flexibility and goodwill toward the problem of resolving the situation around Afghanistan, on the 2d day of the negotiations, that is 3 March, resolved the most fundamental issue used by the opposite side as pretext for many years.

In addition, as a result of the principled flexibility of the Afghan side, a number of the points remaining in the four documents have been resolved. However, from that date onward no action has been witnessed on the Pakistani side.

The Pakistanis are trying to put forward a number of new and impractical matters outside the agenda of the talks, including some relating to the borders, a matter outside the Geneva talks and contrary to Mr Cordovez' mission.

The talks in Geneva are not border talks between Afghanistan and Pakistan. By using this issue, the Pakistani side wants to artificially complicate the process, because such issues cannot be discussed by just these two sides—discussion of this matter also depends on a third country, that is, India. We have noted their concern too.

From the historical viewpoint, the basis of these issues reaches back to the 19th century, to the time of British colonialism on the Indian subcontinent. It began with the colonial Treaty of Durand. Ever since then, no regime in Afghanistan, including those of Muhammad Zahir Shah and Muhammad Da'ud, has accepted it.

Moreover, all the people of Afghanistan, including the refugees—among whom are those refugees who live in Pakistan—have never accepted it. Thus the Republic of Afghanistan Government does not grant itself the authority—contrary to the will of the people of Afghanistan, the Constitution, and the decisions of the historical Grand Assembly of Afghanistan—to include topics outside the Geneva talks and the Geneva agreement.

By creating artificial barriers, Pakistan is trying to postpone signing the documents and reaching agreements, thus exposing the Geneva talks to failure.

Concerning the obstacles mentioned, there are issues which could be mentioned and which have never been discussed in the course of 6 years of talks, and there is no mention of them in the agreed upon documents in Geneva.

They are the establishment of the so-called transitional government prior to the signing of agreements, the cessation of USSR assistance to the Republic of Afghanistan simultaneously with the cessation of U.S. assistance to the several groups opposing the state, etc.

The formation of the coalition government, which practically continues in Afghanistan, is a matter purely and solely dependent on the Afghans themselves. While we are prepared to form a coalition government—as stated in President Najibullah's recent interview—and to talk with all opposition parties at any time, at any level, and any place, the Afghans are in no way prepared to accept a government formed in Pakistan and exported to Afghanistan.

It should be pointed out once again that bilateral cooperation between two independent and sovereign states is the right of all states. Such cooperation basically differs from assisting terrorist and subversive antistate groups.

Thus assistance between Afghanistan and the Soviet Union has historical precedent and legal foundation, is based on the foundation of good-neighborliness, and will continue in the future. Therefore, discussion of such issues—which have never been considered during the past 6 years and have not been reflected in the documents—could have only one aim and that is to create obstacles in the way of signing the agreements and, as a consequence of that, to cease interfering in Afghanistan's internal affairs.

To create these obstacles means the non-maintenance of peace in Afghanistan and the region and the nonreturn of the USSR's limited contingents.

During the past 10 years Pakistan has continued to interfere in Afghanistan's internal affairs—for the profit it gains—against the innocent and persecuted people who are weary of 9 years of war. The fact is that when Mr Cordovez in his news conference yesterday said that we are facing a very serious and difficult problem, it would have been better if he had added that this serious and difficult problem has been created by the Pakistanis.

In the case of postponement—through creating problems—of signing the treaties, Pakistan will have lost the only historical chance of signing the first political agreement between the two countries following the creation of Pakistan in 1947.

This will prevent the establishment of normal relations with Afghanistan and cooperation in the region, both of which are desired by all people of the world to improve the international situation.

It would be a mistake to think that with the postponement of agreeing on the accords in Geneva due to artificial pretexts, the withdrawal of the USSR's limited contingents would still begin on 15 May. The timeframe of the implementation of all requirements contained in the Geneva documents, including the return of the Soviet units, is linked with the signing of the documents and begins only 60 days after the signing.

It should be categorically stated that to whatever extent the Pakistani side delays the signing of the agreements, then to that extent the return of the limited contingents of the Soviet Union will be delayed. These decisions were reflected in the statements 2 days ago by the leaders of the Afghan and Soviet states.

It should be resolutely announced that responsibility for the grave consequences of the failure of the Geneva negotiations will no longer lie with the Afghan and Soviet side, but with the Pakistanis and their backers. History will not forgive those who oppose the maintenance of peace.

Despite all the problems, artificial obstacles, and impractical plans being created by the Pakistani side before the successful conclusion of the Geneva process, the Republic of Afghanistan delegation will make every effort to show flexibility in order that the Geneva accords be signed as soon as possible.

Afghanistan's delegation hopes that this will result not only in the withdrawal of the Soviet forces, but will also prepare the ground for the establishment of peace and security in the region, and also the process of national accord in the country.

I am ready now to answer your questions.

TIME magazine correspondent: You have twice used the word postponement of the talks. Has this word been accepted? Is the postponement of talks under discussion?

Answer: You know yourself that since 3 March, the Pakistanis have not made any movement and have in fact delayed the talks. Previously, they were saying that the only unresolved issue was the withdrawal of the Soviet contingents.

When this issue was resolved, the lack of movement by their side in fact means the delay of the talks process. There is no reason on our side to delay this process.

[Words indistinct] Press: You mentioned the danger of Durand in your talk and pointed it out as if it might cause concern. Do you mean that the spot which has been occupied by India from Pakistan which touches your borders?

Answer: What I said was that we have long history of neighborly ties. Such a border issue, in which India is involved, should not be discussed.

ASSOCIATED PRESS correspondent: You said that one of the issues being put forward by the Pakistani side is the issue of an interim government. But Pakistan says that it is not like that.

Answer: If Pakistan continues or discontinues this policy it will still not achieve any results. The matter of a coalition government is the work of the Afghans themselves. It would be better if the Pakistani side concentrated all its attention on the basic direction of the talks.

Instead of Ziaul Haq and Junejo discussing an issue one day and the next day by Zain Noorani and Abdus Sattar, they should have a joint and united policy.

ASSOCIATED PRESS correspondent: Excuse me. A reply was not given to my question. I said that the Pakistanis have not insisted for the last 1 or 2 weeks that a coalition government should be formed before the signing of the agreements.

Answer: Whether before the talks or after the talks, the formation of a coalition government is not the work of the Pakistanis. However, please read the interview given by Noorani yesterday and pay attention to the news item broadcast by the BBC, quoting Noorani.

Question [name not specified]: You have mentioned that there are some issues which have not been resolved. We have heard that a number of other issues also remain unresolved in addition to those which you pointed out. What is your opinion?

Answer: Those unresolved issues which had existed have been resolved as a result of our flexibility. If there are any other issues which cannot be resolved at this stage, then I will reveal them too.

CALCUTTA TELEGRAPH correspondent: You have said that India expressed concern and you acknowledged this. Has the Indian Government been in touch with you on this matter?

Answer: Not during this talks process, but, before in Kabul, we received [as heard] this concern.

ABC correspondent: Can you estimate how many Afghans are killed every day?

Answer: Certainly, thousands of Afghans have been killed. Each war has its own casualties. That is why we wish the Geneva talks to be concluded successfully as soon as possible, so that the killing of Afghans can be prevented, whichever side they might be on.

Once the agreements are signed and the war ended, certainly nationwide work will be carried out to ascertain the total number of those killed and we will announce them with full details.

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR correspondent: Have you had contacts with any of the delgation from the opposition parties' group here in Geneva? The second part of my question is: Have you had any contacts with the commanders of the opposition inside Afghanistan including Ahmad Shah Mas'ud, who was your classmate?

Answer: Because of their internal disagreements the opposition groups have been unable to send a delegation up to now to Geneva. Based on this disagreement, Yunis Khalis resigned from the leadership of the alliance of oppositions and Gulbuddin has taken his place.

However, if their delegation still comes to Geneva and their aim is to interfere with the Geneva talks, I should say that the Geneva talks are between the two states of Afghanistan and Pakistan and are aimed at resolving the external aspects of the situation around Afghanistan. This has no connection with the opposition groups.

If their aim is to establish contact with us to form a coalition government, then we, in accordance with the statements made by esteemed Najibullah, president of Afghanistan, are ready to talk to our opposition anywhere and at any level.

Concerning Ahmad Shah Mas'ud, Sayyid Jagran Bashir, Farid, and other commanders inside the country, I want to say that we have a different approach to them. Our reason is that during the 9 years of war they did not leave Afghanistan and remained in their country.

According to Ahmad Shah Mas'ud himself, the leaders of Peshawar-based groups only provided them with logistic support. Therefore, we attach value to contacts and talks with these people who are inside country. Our aim is to reach an agreement on forming a coalition government, in the first stage, with these commanders inside the country and this process will continue in future, too. I should say that Ahmad Shah Mas'ud was never my classmate.

Radio France: What does the border problem which has been raised in the talks by Pakistan mean? Second, taking into consideration the long speech which you delivered to the Human Rights Commission on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, are you prepared to release Alan Gio, the French journalist?

Answer: The border problems have a long history in whatever way they are discussed. Their roots go back to Afghanistan's relations during the period of British colonalization in the subcontinent. The colonial and so-called Duran Treaty constitutes the basis.

Whatever the problems, there is no room for discussing them at the Geneva talks. Therefore, the Pakistanis should know that the Geneva talks are not the place to discuss this issue. But in any case, resolution of this issue does not lie within the competence of Mr Cordovez and neither is it included in the framework of this mission.

In connection with human rights and Alan Gio, I should say that they are two completely separate issues. As I said in my statement, we observed all the human rights principles in accordance with the laws of our country. Mr Armacora, special rapporteur of the Human Rights Commission, found the opportunity, during one year, to visit various parts of Afghanistan several times.

The issue of Alan Gio is that he is charged with several illegal border incursions and the charges against him have nothing to do with the human rights. Imagine what the French Government's reaction would be if someone crossed the French border from here—which is close to it—armed and with spy equipment.

To conclude, I thank you for your attention esteemed journalists. I hope to see you again.

Egypt

Officials Celebrate 'Day of Diplomacy'

NC162100 Cairo MENA in English 1930 GMT 16 Mar 88

[Text] Cairo, March 16 (MENA)—Dr 'Atif Sidqi, prime minister, witnessed today, on behalf of President Husni Mubarak, celebrations of the Foreign Ministry marking the Day of the Egyptian Diplomacy.

The celebration was attended by Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd al-Majid, deputy premier and foreign minister, leaders of the different Egyptian parties, and a number of Arab and foreign ambassadors here.

Dr. 'Atif Sidqi, prime minister, read out the speech of President Husni Mubarak marking the day of diplomacy.

Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd al-Majid, deputy premier and foreign minister, expressed, in his speech marking the occasion, happiness for celebrating this day which honours the Egyptian national struggle as the Egyptian diplomacy was one of its means that contributed to reflect its achievements and victories.

Dr. 'Abd al-Majid reviewed stages during which the Egyptian diplomacy has come to being since Egypt has gained its independence in 1922 up till now.

Arab Funding Sought for Minesweepers

PM171607 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 14 Mar 88 p 2

[Unattributed report: "Egyptian-Arab Contacts To Fund Purchase of Oceangoing Minesweepers"]

[Text] Cairo—AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT bureau—AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT has learned from diplomatic sources in Cairo that there are contacts between Egypt and some Arab states concerning the funding by these states of Egypt's purchase of advanced minesweepers, to be used in clearing the waters of any Arab state subject to minelaying attempts.

The sources added that these contacts began immediately after Egypt received two offers from China and France to supply it with advanced types of minesweepers, on the grounds that Egyptian naval forces possess expertise in this field.

The sources said that last year's experience with the mine war in Arab Gulf waters, which led to requests for U.S. and European minesweepers to help in clearing the entrances to Gulf ports, strengthens the idea of Arab funding, to enable Egypt to obtain such minesweepers to be used when needed.

'Arafat Arrives in Cairo for Brother's Funeral

NC180621 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2254 GMT 17 Mar 88

[Text] Cairo, 17 Mar (MENA)—PLO Executive Committee Chairman Yasir 'Arafat arrived in Cairo tonight to attend the funeral of his brother, Mustafa 'Arafat, who died in Cairo earlier today.

On his arrival, 'Arafat was received by Dr Fathi 'Arafat, chairman of the Palestinian Red Crescent Society in Cairo, and Zuhdi al-Qidrah, the PLO representative.

PLO's Al-Hasan Meets With 'Abd al-Majid

NC171357 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1315 GMT 17 Mar 88

[Text] Cairo, 17 Mar (MENA)—Dr 'Ismat 'Abd al-Majid, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, met today with PLO Executive Committee member Khalid al-Hasan, who is currently visiting Cairo. After the meeting, Al-Hasan stated that they discussed current developments in the Arab region, particularly the Palestinian uprising in the occupied Arab territory and U.S. moves in the region.

He stressed that the PLO must participate in any talks designed to achieve peace and a just solution to the Palestinian problem, because these goals cannot be reached unless it does take part. He compared the failure to extend an invitation for the PLO's participation in negotiations to getting off to a false start in a race.

He emphasized that the uprising will continue to pursue its goals despite Israel's repressive measures. On the current Arab situation, he said that certain Arab forces are exerting efforts to support the Palestinian people's uprising. He noted, however, that the Arab situation in general has not risen to the political level of the uprising.

'Abd al-Majid Receives Message From Saudis

NC161309 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1245 GMT 16 Mar 88

[Text] Cairo, 16 Mar (MENA)—Dr 'Ismat 'Abd al-Majid, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, received a message today from Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal at his meeting with 'Abd al-Rahman al-Mansuri, under secretary at the Saudi Foreign Ministry.

During the meeting the two officials reviewed the situation in the Middle East, the Arab stand on the current U.S.-proposed ideas to achieve peace in the region, and the topics to be discussed during the upcoming meeting of Islamic foreign ministers—due to be held in the Jordanian capital on Monday—so as to coordinate the two countries' positions during the conference.

The discussion also touched on bilateral relations and ways to promote them in the various fields.

Oman's Al-'Alawi Arrives in Cairo for Visit

NC162158 Cairo MENA in English 2148 GMT 16 Mar 88

[Text] Cairo, March 16 (MENA)—Yusuf ibn al-'Alawi, Omani minister of state for foreign affairs, arrived here tonight on a few days' visit.

In an arrival statement, Al-'Alawi said he will be conferring with Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd al-Majid on the current Arab region developments and the distinctive Egypt-Oman relations.

Departure Noted 17 Mar

NC171008 Cairo MENA in English 0950 GMT 17 Mar 88

[Text] Cairo, March 17 (MENA)—Omani State Minister for Foreign Affairs Yusuf ibn al-'Alawi left here today for home winding up a one-day visit.

He had talks with Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Dr 'Ismat 'Abd al-Majid who saw him off at the airport.

Mubarak's Sudan Visit Spawns Military Accord

PM151635 Cairo AL-SHA'B in Arabic 8 Mar 88 p 1

[Unattributed report: "New Egyptian-Sudanese Military Strategy"]

[Text] AL-SHA'B has learned that during President Mubarak's surprise visit to Sudan at the head of a high-ranking delegation last Tuesday, it was agreed to draw up a long-term Egyptian-Sudanese military strategy covering military cooperation and joint planning and to supply Sudan with all its military needs.

In his talks with Sudanese State Council Chairman Ahmad al-Mirghani and Prime Minister Al-Sadiq al-Mahdi, President Mubarak emphasized that Egypt would intervene directly and militarily if ever there is an escalation of operations constituting a threat to Sudan by certain foreign forces. This came in the wake of recent threats to Sudan through military concentrations on Sudanese borders.

AL-SHA'B has also learned that as soon as news of mounting threats to Sudanese territory reached Egypt, President Mubarak made urgent telephone contact with Ahmad al-Mirghani at 2100 last Monday and affirmed to him that he would be arriving in Sudan Tuesday morning.

The other officials who were to accompany the president were then contacted at their homes. They were Marshal Abu Ghazalah, Dr 'Ismat 'Abd al-Majid, Dr Yusuf Wali, and Dr Yusri Mustafa.

Economy Minister Leaves for FRG Trade Talks

NC171217 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1150 GMT 17 Mar 88

[Text] Cairo, 17 Mar (MENA)—Dr Yusri Mustafa, minister of economy and foreign trade, left Cairo today for a 3-day visit to the FRG.

During the visit, Dr Mustafa will take part in the informal talks concerning customs fees imposed by certain states, particularly developing ones, on their imports to protect local industry. He will also discuss the possibility of enhancing trade, particularly in the field of textiles and agricultural products, and the quota system, which keeps Egypt from enhancing its trade with several countries, particularly those in Europe.

Papers View 'Uprising,' U.S. Support for Israel

NC180646 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2312 GMT 17 Mar 88

[Text] Cairo, 17 Mar (MENA)—In Friday's editions, Egyptian newspapers carry further comments on the Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories, the Arab stand on the uprising, Israel's continued use of brutal practices to abort the uprising, and the U.S. support which Israel enjoys, despite its brutal acts against Palestinian citizens.

The newspaper AL-AKHBAR criticizes the Arab world's reactions to the Palestinian uprising in the occupied Arab territories, noting that these reactions are still characterized by a sluggishness that is in keeping neither with the escalating Israeli violence and brutality, aimed at suppressing the uprising, nor with the deaths of dozens and wounding of thousands of Palestinians.

The paper notes that this sluggishness first appeared in the response to a call to hold an emergency Arab summit to confront the situation and extend prompt aid to the steadfast Palestinians, who are exhibiting a heroism that has moved consciences the world over.

The paper adds that it was believed that the call for holding a summit would receive a prompt, indeed, an immediate response from the majority of the members of the Arab League, particularly as the situation does not permit any delay.

Nevertheless, obtaining a quorum of 11 countries to hold the summit did not take place until after a long period. The paper says that this causes much regret and confusion over the causes of the silence being maintained by more than half of the Arab League's members on this issue.

It adds that this attitude also casts doubts over how serious these countries are about adopting a decisive and unified position that would demonstrate to the world the Arab nation's solidarity with the Palestinian people.

In conclusion, the paper expresses the hope that the remaining leaders, who prefer to watch rather than contribute any effort to assist the Palestinian citizens, will be moved to help at least with words.

AL-JUMHURIYAH asserts that Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir's evasive tactics during his talks in Washington on peace efforts in the Middle East, and the feebleness of U.S. justice, will not prevent struggling nations from obtaining their liberty and rights.

The newspaper notes that Shamir did not give clear yes or no answers and expressed reservations on holding an international peace conference during his talks with U.S. President Ronald Reagan and U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz.

The paper says that this shows Shamir's confidence that the concept of the pampered friend in U.S.-Israeli relations is still in force.

The paper adds that this concept is confirmed by the series of repressive measures imposed by the Israeli Government on the occupied Arab territories while Shamir was visiting Washington, noting that these measures reached their climax in the isolation of the occupied territories from the outside world, so that it would become possible to confront the uprising using all methods.

The paper adds that, despite this total news blackout, reports have leaked out stating that the occupation forces have resorted to gouging out the eyes of Palestinians and amputating their legs to discourage them from demanding an end to the occupation.

It notes that instead of having U.S. justice question Shamir about his responsibility for the repression and violence, the U.S. Congress presented him with additional modern fighter aircraft. The paper further notes that the U.S. Administration has also reaffirmed its decision to close down the PLO's mission at the United Nations.

Briefs

Protocol With Finland

Cairo, 17 Mar (MENA)—Egypt and Finland today signed a technical cooperation protocol in the field of energy. Under the protocol, Finland will help Egypt replace and renovate power plants. The protocol also provides for the formation of a high-level joint committee for cooperation in these areas. It also provides for the exchange of expertise, technology, and experts. The agreement was signed for Egypt by Engineer Mahir Abazah, minister of electricity and energy, and for Finland by Minister of Trade and Industry Iikka Suominen. [Excerpt] [*NC171727 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1450 GMT 17 Mar 88*]

Libya

Jabir Hosts Banquet for Sudan's Al-Mirghani

LD171147 Tripoli JANA in English 0946 GMT 17 Mar 88

[Text] Tripoli, Al-Marikh [March] 17, JAMAHIRIYAH NEWS AGENCY—Col. Abu Bakr Yunis Jabir, commander-in-chief of the Libyan Arab Armed Forces, gave a banquet yesterday in honour of Mr. A. al-Mirghani, president of Supreme Council of sisterly Sudan, and his accompanying delegation.

Present at this banquet were the secretary of the Libyan Arab Brotherhood Bureau in Sudan, Sudan's ambassador in Tripoli and a number of the Libvyan Arab Armed Forces officers.

Col. Jabir made Mr. al-Mirghani a present of Libyan Arab saddle.

Briefs

Italian Envoy Signs Protocol

Tripoli, Mirrikh [March] 16, JAMAHIRIYAH NEWS AGENCY—This morning at the People's Bureau for Foreign Liaison signing took place on the protocol meetings of experts from the People's Bureau for Foreign Liaison, the centre for Libyans' jihad and the envoy from the Italian Foreign Ministry Professor "Erico Sierra" [name as received] the director of the archive department at the ministry. The protocol included the stress upon speedy implementation of a work plan to ensure the exploration of the period of Italian colonialism of Libya, presentation of lists of names of Libyans Italy had sent to exile in various Italian islands and to know the fate of those still living and the sites of the graves of those who had died and stating the dates and causes of the death. It also included allowing a Libyan Arab team of researchers and experts to search the relevant documents concerning the exiles kept in various Italian archives houses and provide the necessary technical assistance to make the team's task easier. [Text] [*LD170107 Tripoli JANA in English 1702 GMT 16 Mar*]

Morocco

Zairian President Arrives on Private Visit

LD172059 Rabat Domestic Service in Arabic 1600 GMT 17 Mar 88

[Excerpt] Marshal Mobutu Sese Seko, president of the Republic of Zaire, arrived in our country this afternoon on a private visit. [passage omitted]

Briefs

Libyan Social Security Accord

Morocco and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriyah signed an appendix to an agreement on social security. The signing ceremony was presided over by Minister of Public Health Taieb Bencheikh and Ibrahim Qaydar, secretary of the Libyan Social Security Fund. The Moroccan and Libyan sides expressed their wish to strengthen the cooperative relations that bind them. The secretary of the Libyan Social Security Fund described his talks with Moroccan officials as having been conducted in an atmosphere of understanding, during which a practical program in the fields of social work, particularly the field of social security, was formulated. The Libyan official said this is a step forward within the framework of social and economic work toward the unity of the greater Arab Maghreb. [Excerpt] [*LD170435 Rabat Domestic Service in Arabic 2300 GMT 16 Mar 88*]

News Agreement With Mauritania

MAP 4 Rabat [dateline as received]—An agreement on cooperation and the exchange of news between MAP and the Mauritanian news agency AMP was signed in Rabat on Monday morning by the directors of the two agencies. The agreement provides for the exchange of news, photos, documentation, and technical assistance. [Summary] [*LD150033 Rabat MAP in French 1530 GMT 14 Mar 88*]

Sudan

U.S. Decision To Close PLO Office Denounced

JN171444 Khartoum SUNA in Arabic 1425 GMT 17 Mar 88

[Text] Khartoum, 17 Mar (SUNA)—Sudan has denounced the U.S. decision to close the PLO's UN office in New York

A Foreign Ministry spokesman said here today that the decision breaches the 1947 agreement between the United Nations and its host nation, the United States.

It is also incompatible with ongoing UN and other international efforts to find a solution to the Palestinian problem and put an end to the suffering of the Palestinian people.

This suffering, the spokesman said, is caused by Israel's repressive measures that seek to suppress the Palestinian uprising.

Leaders Comment on Al-Mahdi's Assembly Speech

Dr Lolik Supports Demands

JN171910 Khartoum SUNA in Arabic 1725 GMT 17 Mar 88

[Text] Khartoum, 17 Mar (SUNA)—State Council member Dr Pacifico Lado Lolik has said that the prime minister's speech to the Constituent Assembly contains an objective assessment of the dangers facing Sudan. The options listed by the prime minister mark a real test of the democratic experiment, he said.

He supported the prime minister's demand for a new mandate and wider powers in a country beset with a civil war, numerous economic problems, and a breakdown in the civil service system.

Granting the prime minister the powers he is seeking will be a real test of his ability to carry out his program, Dr Lolik added.

Meanwhile, Father James Surur, head of the Progressive People's Party and the southern parties alliance, has described Al-Mahdi's speech as timely, coinciding with ministerial and economic crises and the bloodletting in the south.

He said the government's performance over the past 2 years has not been equal to the gravity of its challenges. The government, he added, has been unable to live up to the aspriations of the masses.

Surur said he had expected the prime minister to seek a vote of confidence in his cabinet as a team rather than in himself.

He commended the speech's emphasis on religious tolerance, calling for equal rights and unrestricted religious freedom.

Al-Nasri: Proposals Necessary

JN172032 Khartoum SUNA in Arabic 1753 GMT 17 Mar 88

[Text] State Council Member Mirghani al-Nasri has said that the national consensus government proposed by Prime Minister Al-Sadiq al-Mahdi in his speech to the Constituent Assembly on 15 March is urgently needed at this juncture.

He said the goals set out by the prime minister call for the widest possible popular support.

Al-Nasri sharply criticized attempts to establish a link between the future of democracy in the country and the current ministerial crisis. He emphasized that Sudan had earned worldwide attention by opening wide the democratic process.

He said he is confident the ministerial crisis will pass and that democracy will stay and deepen. Those who believe in coup d'etats are daydreamers. The people are well able to defend democracy, Al-Nasri said.

Al-Banna Urges Complete Backing

JN172002 Khartoum SUNA in Arabic 1750 GMT 17 Mar 88

[Text] State Council member Idris al-Banna says any government reform program will be pointless until the last traces of the defunct May regime have been eliminated.

He said the prime minister's statement to the Constituent Assembly on 15 March accurately and responsibly pinpointed the government's successes and failures, and charted a future course.

Al-Banna urged that the prime minister be given complete political backing.

Any measure of tolerance for the supporters of the defunct regime will neutralize reform programs.

Al-Banna charged that certain newspapers are working to wreck democracy by making a point of raising issues that project Numayri as a hero, thereby forcing a comparison between democracy and the defunct regime.

Kuwait

USSR Envoy Comments on Progress of Relations

LD171511 Kuwait KUNA in English 1343 GMT 17 Mar 88

[By Salih Nazzal]

[Text] Kuwait, March 17 (KUNA)—A top Soviet diplomat said here Thursday that Kuwaiti-Soviet relations are based on mutual respect and non-intervention in internal affairs of each other.

Ernest Zverev, Soviet ambassador to Kuwait, added in a press conference held on the 25th anniversary of establishing ties between the two countries, that the Soviet Union is greatly satisfied over the progress of relations in a relatively short period of time.

He noted that contacts between both countries' officials was made on all levels and was crowned by messages between H.H. the Amir and the Soviet leadership during the mounting of tension in the Gulf region last year.

Zverev said that he relayed a message to H.H. the Amir from Moscow during his meeting with Acting Premier and Foreign Minister Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad yesterday.

The Amir had sent messages last month to leaders of members of the Security Council, particularly the five permanent ones, to bring to their attention the tragic escalation of the Iraq-Iran war, code-named the War of Cities.

The Soviet ambassador pointed out to the many meetings between Shaykh Sabah and Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze in Moscow and New York and also the visits by Moscow envoys to Kuwait during the past months.

He noted that though characterised by continuous progress and understanding, links between Kuwait and Moscow do not mean that the two countries have identical views toward all issues.

Speaking of bilateral economic and commercial relations, two embassy counsellors in this regard indicated that the trade balance between the two countries started at 2 million dollars in 1964 and kept increasing until 1985 when Kuwait passed through a critical era. It resumed its surge, however, to reach 7 million dollars in 1987.

Regarding the blazing Iraq-war [as received], Zverev denied that his country wants only part of the conflict to end, by issuing a resolution calling for a halt to the shelling of cities, affirming that such a proposal was made for humanitarian reasons.

He stressed that Moscow does not have secret ideas or special interests, saying an insinuation of separating between the War of Cities and the conflict as a whole, is a Western propaganda which tries to tarnish the Soviet Union's image.

The ranking Soviet diplomat said that the continuation of bombarding cities could lead to the use of chemical warfare, affirming that a solution to end this war is in everybody's interest as a prelude to end the whole conflict.

He said that his country backs U.N. efforts to end the conflict, particularly the July 20 Resolution 598 in this respect, centering on holding a meeting between the two belligerents.

Zverev said that his country supports the Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories with political and non-political means, indicating that popular rallies were organised in the Soviet Union to express solidarity with the revolt.

He added that PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat will visit Moscow soon and has met with the Soviet envoy Polyakov who repeated the invitation to 'Arafat.

On Soviet stance toward the Zionist entity, he affirmed that no change has taken place in this regard, affirming that Moscow will not restore its ties with Tel Aviv before a settlement to the Mideast crisis is reached.

Speaking of the Afghan problem and attempts to end it, Zverev stressed that a request by Pakistan on forming a coalition government was a key cause in obstructing the way to a solution.

He noted that six years of efforts, produced a comprehensive agreement, based on stopping foreign intervention, repatriating Afghan refugees to their homeland, furnishing international guarantees of non-intervention and then withdrawing Soviet forces.

The Soviet diplomat said that the agreement was ready for endorsement on March 2 and a signing ceremony on March 15, adding if this process were finalised, a Soviet withdrawal would start next May 15 over the coming nine months.

Zverev emphasized that there is a connection between the Gulf war and the situation in Afghanistan, "because there is a common party in both cases, namely Iran, which plays a role in the Afghan crisis."

He said that Moscow strongly believes that any success in resolving the Afghan issue, will reflect positively on ending the Iraq-Iran war, affirming that his country will not overlook the Gulf situation, in case the hostilities in Afghanistan come to a halt.

PDRY

Foreign Minister on YAR, Palestinians, Gulf

PM161159 London AL-HAWADITH in Arabic 11 Mar 88 pp 32, 33

[Interview with Foreign Minister 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Dali by 'Afaf Zayn in Aden; date not specified]

[Excerpts] AL-HAWADITH: Observers have thought for some time that Aden could not follow up events in the Arab world because it was preoccupied with its own situation. What is your opinion, how would you assess the results of the recent Amman summit, and on what principles is PDRY policy based?

Al-Dali: Saying we were preoccupied with our internal affairs following the painful plotting incidents is absolutely untrue. Immediately after we dealt with the situation we made an extensive tour of a number of Arab capitals with a view to putting our brothers in the picture and briefing them on facts behind the matter. Our tours included important talks which dealt with the notable issues involving the Arab world.

As for the current situation, we are optimistic despite all expectations indicating otherwise. We believe the Amman summit and the [Palestinian] uprising have revived Arab reality, which was dominated by monotony and boredom. [passage omitted]

AL-HAWADITH: Shortly after the Amman summit you restored relations with Cairo. What changes occurred between the Bghdad summit and Amman summit to prompt you to overlook some of the principles you referred to concerning your foreign policy?

Al-Dali: New developments have occured since the Baghdad summit which unanimously decided to sever relations with Egypt.

However, we still maintain our firm stand of rejecting partial solutions; it is the pillar of our foreign policy at the level of the Arab world. Nothing has changed in this stand. At our meetings with our brothers in Cairo we frankly tell them we differ with them over this issue.

We must not forget that Egypt has begun to adopt an approach differing from that of Camp David and calling for the convening of an international conference on the Middle East.

AL-HAWADITH: Did you notice this change in Cairo's political approach after or before the initiative made by the Egyptian president?

Al-Dali: Before, of course. According to our understanding the objective of an international conference is to enter into negotiations to be attended by the parties concerned, the Security Council's five permanent members, and the PLO as well, which must participate on an equal footing with the other parties to restore the Palestinian peoples' right to self-determination as well as their right to establish an independent state.

In our assessment this approach, that is, Egypt's support for an international conference—and we hope it will take place—will keep Cairo away from the Camp David approach. I believe President Husni Mubarak recently made a statement to the effect that the idea of autonomy has ended and is gone forever.

The objective of the restoration of relations by the Arab states, including us, is to persuade our brothers, the officials in Egypt, to stop abiding by the Camp David Accords and adopt a stand closer to ours with regard to the Palestinian problem and how to deal with it.

AL-HAWADITH: After the uprising some observers expected Egypt to call its ambassador from Tel Aviv, but this did not take place. What is your comment?

Al-Dali: We still expect the brothers in Egypt to take up a much firmer stand expressive of the Egyptian people's solidarity with the Palestinian people, who are facing an unprecedented campaign of repression launched by the imperialist, colonialist war machine in Israel.

We hope the Egyptian Government will take up this stand not only to express the feelings of the Arab peoples, but also to support the just Palestinian cause. [passage omitted]

AL-HAWADITH: The PDRY is known to have been firmly committed to the Palestinian question since independence. It has followed the stages of Palestinian struggle since it began within organizational frameworks. Do you believe what has been said about the formation of a Palestinian government-in-exile is an advanced step in the struggle, making good use of the escalating uprising so legitimate rights can be restored?

Al-Dali: This matter primarily concerns the fraternal Palestinian people and the PLO. But we believe, and we are confident of this, that the Palestinian brothers will only embark on steps that will enhance Palestinian struggle, and not the opposite, whether by forming a government-in-exile or by taking other steps.

The important thing is for such steps not to have a negative impact on what the Palestinian people have achieved over years of struggle, namely major steps on the road to liberation and self-determination. [passage omitted]

AL-HAWADITH: Yemen, with its two parts, is the only Arabian peninsula country that has not entered the Gulf militarization race; nor has it established balanced relations with the two parties to the Iraq-Iran conflict.

How can Yemen, within coordinated policies, create a suitable climate for the initiation of peaceful negotiations over the Iraq-Iran war so the sides can extricate themselves from the impasse?

Al-Dali: I am of the same opinion, namely, that the situation is now very complicated. Despite this there is still a glimmer of light in this gloomy atmosphere created by the war between two fraternal peoples, the Iraqi and Iranian peoples.

We can only hope the day will come when circumstances will be suitable for stopping this destructive war, which is having an adverse impact on the future of the peoples in the region. All that we can do is to support what is correct and denounce what is wrong. Such a stand would only be declared after direct contacts were made with the parties concerned.

AL-HAWADITH: Do you believe that militarizing the Gulf would help create the appropriate atmosphere to end the war, implement the Security Council resolutions, denounce erroneous acts, and encourage the development of what is right?

Al-Dali: We are absolutely against the militarization of the Gulf. Such a measure will certainly not help to end the war or its dangerous escalation. In fact the opposite is the case: I believe that the presence of foreign fleets, especially the U.S. fleet, increases the severity of tension in relations among the states in the region.

It also increases the prospects of escalation moving to new areas. Regrettably, this has happened in the past stage. We have appealed and still appeal for the withdrawal of these fleets from the Gulf. We do not agree with the assumption that foreign fleets will help to end the war. However, we do respect the opinion of others while we do not support their stand.

AL-HAWADITH: The U.S. Administration has taken a decision to reduce its forces in the Arab Gulf. There are reports indicating that Washington intends to head toward the Red Sea. So there must be legitimate reasons for this U.S. military step in order to justify such a suspect move.

How can both Aden and Sanaa, as a preventive measure, coordinate together to thwart this U.S. move, if such reports are true?

Al-Dali: We have read some reports referring to the matter you talk about. This indicates the U.S. Government intends to establish some U.S. military bases in the approaches to the Red Sea in coordination with some European allies.

If this is true, we believe it is an extremely serious possibility that could create a situation leading to tension in the region, which so far has enjoyed a kind of stability and security. Therefore, in our previous meetings with the northern part [of Yemen] and during our recent contacts with Djibouti we dealt with this serious possibility.

AL-HAWADITH: Have you made contacts with Djibouti recently regarding this issue?

Al-Dali: Yes. Contacts have been made with Djibouti to discuss this issue. We stressed our eagerness not to allow any tension in this region in particular, to establish relations of common cooperation and peace among the Red Sea states, and to eliminate anything that would cause tension in relations in the region by not allowing foreign bases to be established in the region.

If what has been reported is proved to be true, then the U.S. move will be considered a serious step aimed at transferring tension to a region which enjoys both security and stability. On this occasion we call on the states in the region to be aware of what is being hatched against the region's security and stability, namely, hostile schemes aimed at kindling tension in more than one place in our developing countries, which long for progress and growth.

AL-HAWADITH: In view of this new situation, do you believe that the relationship between the two parts of Yemen is being subjected to foreign regional international influence or has the relationship passed the stage of being influenced by regional and international factors, thus becoming linked to the independent decisionmaking in both parts?

Al-Dali: I am inclined to emphasize that the relationship between the two parts of Yemen is dictated by the independent decisionmaking of the political leaderships in Sanaa and Aden. At all stages the relationship has been linked to Yemeni-Yemeni relations. Decisions have never been influenced by foreign factors.

It is the political leaderships in the two parts which make these decisions. This relationship is of a special nature that differs from relations with other states. We proceed on the basis of Yemen's higher interests. Both our current and future relations are linked before anything else to higher national interests.

AL-HAWADITH: Some observers believe that the presence of PDRY leaders in the north could cause a crack in the fabric of the relationship between the two parts of Yemen, which could assist the implementation of schemes aimed at causing tension in the atmosphere in the region. How can both Sanaa and Aden avoid such a situation?

Al-Dali: We have made numerous contacts with the brothers in the north. They have told us, via Brother President 'Ali 'Abd al-Salih, that they would not allow any hostile moves to be launched from the north toward the south; nor would they allow the leaders seeking

shelter there to disturb relations between the two parts of the country or embark on any action that would harm the understanding process or drag us into a situation we would not like.

In view of these assurances we can say we have full confidence in what Brother 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih has said. We are now seeking to return all those to whom the recent general amnesty, issued in late October, applies.

Therefore, we believe that both we and the brothers in the north are eager not to allow the presence of these elements now present in the north to constitute a source of tension for the south. The leadership in the south has expressed sincere willingness to receive those who emigrated to the northern part of the homeland.

Yemen Arab Republic

Reportage on Visit by Jordan's King Husayn

Arrives, Makes Statement

JN172006 Sanaa Domestic Service in Arabic
1700 GMT 17 Mar 88

[Excerpts] His Majesty King Husayn ibn Talal, king of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, arrived in Sanaa this afternoon. His majesty was accorded a great official welcome at Sanaa International Airport. Brother Colonel 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, president of the Republic, commander in chief of the Armed Forces, and secretary general of the General People's Congress, headed those who welcomed him. [passage omitted]

During a brief rest at the VIP lounge, King Husayn made a statement to SABA' in which he said: Brother Colonel 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih is one of the brothers who assume responsibility in the greater homeland with his spirit, conscience, and heart.

He is a genuine Arab and an intimate friend. We are here in our second homeland and among our kinfolk and brothers facing changes and developments in the entire Arab homeland. These changes and developments affect the Arab struggle and the future of our coming generations.

King Husayn expressed happiness for visiting our country, pointing out that during the visit he will meet with Brother Colonel 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih and the brother officials to hold consultations about all matters and the entire situation.

He affirmed the two countries are as one country and share the same destiny. He expressed pride in the two countries' achievements in the interest of the two fraternal peoples.

Concluding his statement, King Husayn said this is only the beginning and that our countries will move to wider horizons. Cooperation is comprehensive and consolidated by resolve, determination, sincerity, and awareness of all tasks.

Later, the two leaders' motorcade headed for the presidential palace in Sanaa where the grand guest will reside during his visit to our country.

Begins Official Talks

JN172048 Sanaa Domestic Service in Arabic
2000 GMT 17 Mar 88

[Text] His Majesty King Husayn ibn Talal, king of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, tonight called on his brother, Colonel 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, president of the Republic, commander in chief of the Armed Forces, and secretary general of the General People's Congress, in his office at the presidential palace.

The two brother leaders held a closed round of talks during which they reviewed the most important Arab and international developments in the light of the mammoth Palestinian popular uprising against the Zionist occupation authorities' continuous terrorist and repressive campaign against the Palestinian Arab people in the occupied Arab territories. They also reviewed the latest political moves in the region, in addition to the Iraq-Iran war developments and the brotherly bilateral relations.

At 2015 today, an official session of talks between our country and the sisterly Kingdom of Jordan was held under the chairmanship of Brothers Col 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, president of the Republic, commander in chief of the Armed Forces, and secretary general of the General People's Congress, and His Majesty King Husayn ibn Talal, king of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

Attending on the Yemeni side were brothers 'Abd al-'Aziz 'Abd al-Ghani, prime minister and member of the Standing Committee; Dr 'Abd al- Karim al-Iryani, deputy prime minister, foreign minister, and Standing Committee member; Hasan Ahmad al-Lawzi, minister of information and culture and Standing Committee member; Dr Muhammad Ahmad al-Kabab, minister of health and Standing Committee member; 'Ali Muhammad al-Anisi, director of the presidential office and Standing Committee member; and Ahmad Radi, secretary general of the presidency.

Attending on the Jordanian side were Prime Minister Zayd al-Rifa'i, Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'd ibn Zayd, Information Minister Hani al-Khasawinah, Jordanian Ambassador in Sanaa Sa'd al-Batayinah, and Colonel Fawwaz al-Zabn, commander of the Desert Force and Border Guards.

President Chairs Armed Forces Command Meeting
JN171239 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1135 GMT
17 Mar 88

[Text] Baghdad, 17 Mar (INA)—President Staff Marshal Saddam Husayn, commander in chief of the Armed Forces, has chaired an Armed Forces General Command meeting.

Attending the meeting were Staff General 'Adnan Khayrallah, deputy commander in chief of the Armed Forces and defense minister; Staff General 'Abd al-Jabbar Shanshal, minister of state for military affairs; the president's secretary; and Colonel Husayn Kamil, official in charge of the military industrialization commission.

President Interviewed by Egyptian Paper
NC172220 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2135 GMT
17 Mar 88

[Text] Cairo, 17 Mar (MENA)—Iraqi President Saddam Husayn has emphasized that Iran intends to establish a so-called Islamic expansionist empire. He noted that it is hiding its colonialist designs behind empty religious slogans, and explained that the slogan pertaining to the establishment of an Islamic Iranian empire is based on a creed called "the rule of the imam" in his capacity as God's agent on earth, the imam now being Khomeyni.

The Iraqi president said that the Iranian aggression collided from the beginning with Iraq, which is the first gateway that must be demolished before Iran's flames can swallow up and incinerate other parts of the Arab homeland and other Islamic nations.

The Iraqi president added that, in contrast, Arab and Islamic conduct and policy are characterized by peace. He noted that Iranian aggression will not end unless the slogan "the rule of the imam" is abandoned.

He remarked that Iranian motives are based on a deviant and dangerous religious outlook, and that espousing such an outlook in politics is also deviant and dangerous.

In an interview to be published by the newspaper AL-AHRAM tomorrow, the Iraqi president referred to the war of cities between Iraq and Iran and recalled Iran's actions of 8 years ago. He said Iran was the party which began the war of the cities prior to 22 September 1980, when it bombarded Iraqi border cities such as Basra, Khanaqin, Mandali, and Zurbatiyah.

He added that Iraq enjoyed a partial respite from this war only when the Iraqi Army repelled the Iranian Army, forcing it to retreat inside Iranian territory.

Iraqi President Saddam Husayn called on the two superpowers to adopt a serious decision on banning arms shipments to Iran now that Iran has rejected UN Security Council Resolution 598, which provides for ending the war. President Saddam Husayn also urged the Arabs, particularly the Iraqis, to remain vigilant and cautious, and to look out for any apparently opportunistic behavior on the international political scene that would take place at Iraq's expense.

Asked about the usefulness of the dialogue the GCC intends to carry out with Iran, the Iraqi president said there can be no friendship with Iran unless it halts its aggression against Iraq and accepts Resolution 598.

He added that Iraq understands the intentions of the brothers of the Gulf and knows that they do not mean to harm Iraq in any way.

Commenting on the Palestinian issue, the Iraqi president described the current uprising in the occupied Arab territories as a revolt against injustice, occupation, tyranny, and oppression. He said that the Arab people in the occupied territories are expressing through their uprising the noblest patriotic sentiments and their determination to struggle against persecution.

He said that he foresees a great future for the uprising and added that we must not be too hasty in asking to reap its results. He urged the Arabs to support the uprising with their words, money, moves on the international scene, and solidarity.

Regarding his meeting with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad during the Amman Arab summit in November 1987, the Iraqi president expressed his belief that the meeting was fruitless and said that it had taken place at the insistence of some Arab leaders. He described Syria's stance vis-a-vis Iraq's war with Iran as an unacceptable error by pan-Arab standards.

Referring to Egyptian-Iraqi relations, the Iraqi president said that the two countries must enhance their existing cooperation in various spheres by developing it in quantity and quality, to a degree that would serve the interests of the two peoples and the entire Arab homeland.

He described his relationship with President Muhammad Husni Mubarak as fraternal, adding that they trust each other. He affirmed that fraternity and trust are all that matters.

Commenting on his memories of the days when he lived in Egypt as a young man, the Iraqi president said that period gave him the opportunity to get to know well the Egyptian people. He described the Egyptians as good and patient people. He declared that he looks forward to visiting Egypt and will do so when the circumstances of the war permit.

At the conclusion of the interview, the Iraqi president referred to the Iraqi manufacture of the "Al-Husayn" missile, which has a range of 650 km. He said that Iraqi military industries were able to develop it to give it a range of 850 km.

Khayrallah Threatens 'Tougher' Measures

JN181643 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1546 GMT 18 Mar 88

[Text] Baghdad, 18 Mar (INA)—Staff General 'Adnan Khayrallah, deputy commander in chief of the Armed Forces and defense minister, has said that the international committees and organizations and all world forces of good should draw the Iranian rulers' attention to the fact that the road of evil they have chosen during the past 8 years will only lead them to the abyss.

They are thus blindly implementing Zionist schemes aimed at fragmenting and weakening the region. The defense minister called on the Iranian people to pressure their rulers into stopping the war in accordance with the logical and legitimate principles embodied in Resolution No 598 and according to the sequence of its operative clauses.

Speaking at a meeting held at the I Army Corps sector today, the deputy commander in chief of the Armed Forces added that Iran's insistence on destruction compels us to reply to the war with war, using all available means to defend our country and people, because we have no other option but to defend great Iraq and protect its people and its sovereignty.

The defense minister warned that Iran's obstinacy and insistence on its irresponsible stands will oblige Iraq to adopt tougher and stronger measures, while keeping our hands open for a just and honorable peace, which stems from a sincere desire to establish good-neighborly relations without interference in the sovereignty of any of the two countries and in a manner that will avert the woes of war.

The defense minister praised the high morale of our units in the northern sector and commended the hero fighters, who form an impregnable wall against all the abortive enemy attempts to harm our pure soil.

Staff Gen 'Abd al-Jabbar Shanshal, minister of state for military affairs, and a number of high-ranking officers attended the meeting.

Progressive Front Discusses Cities War

JN171452 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1340 GMT 17 Mar 88

[Text] Baghdad, 17 Mar (INA)—Hasan 'Ali, member of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party Regional Command and secretary of the Progressive National and Patriotic Front [PNPF] in Iraq, has affirmed that, through its violation of the conditions to stop the cities war, the Iranian regime is trying the divert the attention of the international community from Security Council Resolution No 598 and from imposing sanctions on Iran; its rulers refuse to implement the resolution with all its articles in accordance with the sequence of its paragraphs.

He said that Iraq's capable response to this criminal behavior represents a legitimate right to self-defense in accordance with international law. Those who want to stop the cities war should work earnestly, honestly, and effectively to implement the Security Council resolution, he said.

At a meeting of the PNPF here today, Hasan 'Ali affirmed that the Iraqi people under President Saddam Husayn, who have defeated the aggression throughout the past 8 years, can confront all desperate attempts to encroach on their sovereignty and dignity.

At the end of the meeting, the PNPF Secretariat decided to continue its international campaign to condemn and punish the Zionist Iranian enemy, who ignited the cities war. It also decided to call on the international community—through political forces and parties, mass organizations, and national fronts all over the world—to exercise their role in reinforcing the international community's will, which opposes aggression, and to implement the binding Security Council Resolution No 598 in accordance with the sequence of its paragraphs to acheive peace.

Representatives of the Ba'th Party, the KDP, and the Kurdistan Revolutionary Party participated in the meeting.

Peace Delegation Departs for Prague Meetings

JN171304 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1130 GMT 17 Mar 88

[Text] Baghdad, 17 Mar (INA)—A delegation from the Iraqi friendship, peace, and solidarity organization led by 'Abdallah Husayn left for Prague today to participate in the expanded annual meeting of the World Peace Council's Presidium, which will begin there on Saturday.

'Abdallah Husayn, member of the organization and head of the delegation, will deliver a message to the meeting from President Saddam Husayn. He will also present a working paper on the history of Persian hostility toward Iraq, developments in the Iraq-Iran war, and Iraq's stands on international and regional efforts to bring about peace.

The Presidium will discuss the most important international issues, including disarmament, world security, regional conflicts, and human rights.

'Aziz Returns After Visiting London, Paris

JN171825 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1800 GMT 17 Mar 88

[Text] Baghdad, 17 Mar (INA)—Tariq 'Aziz, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, returned to Baghdad tonight after visiting London and Paris for the seven-member Arab committee delegation charged with following up developments in the popular uprising in the occupied Arab territory.

President Receives Libyan Envoy, Letter

JN042029 Baghdad Voice of the Masses in Arabic 2000 GMT 4 Mar 88

[Text] President Saddam Husayn has received a personal letter from his brother Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, president of the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriyah.

It was delivered by Ibrahim al-Bishari, a personal envoy of the Libyan leader, when he called on his excellency the president today.

Reportage on Gulf War Combat Activities

Spokesman Denies Planes Downed

JN171424 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1411 GMT 17 Mar 88

[Text] Baghdad, 17 Mar (INA)—Iraq has denied the downing of an Iraqi plane as Iran claimed today. In a statement to INA this evening, a military spokesman said that all the planes that carried out their missions yesterday and today deep inside Iran or on the battlefront returned safely to base. He added:

These lies launched by the Iranian regime aim at covering up the destruction inflicted on their cities and economic installations related to the war effort, as well as the heavy losses inflicted on its war machine on the battlefronts by the Iraqi aircraft.

Communique Notes Air Strikes

JN171817 Baghdad Voice of the Masses in Arabic 1700 GMT 17 Mar 88

[Communique No 3,081 issued by the Armed Forces General Command on 17 March]

[Text] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. Our heroic Air Force has continued its harvest of the enemy remnants on the battlefront. Our Air Force also continued its penetration deep inside enemy territory to pound the dens of injustice and unjust rulers and to punish those who started the war, still insist on it, and ignited and reignited the cities war.

With these devastating blows, our Air Force affirms Iraq's superiority, consolidates its victory, avenges its martyrs, draws together with the other Armed Forces on the path of peace based on justice, and protects the homeland and citizens in confronting aggression and treason.

The results of our Air Force activities for last night and today are as follows:

1. Today, our daring aircraft flew 264 combat missions in the areas of operations, inflicting very heavy losses on enemy personnel, positions, hardware, weapons, and ammunition dumps. The Iranian enemy could not hide the heavy losses inflicted by our hawks last night and today.

2. At 1100 [0800 GMT] today, our aircraft penetrated to the city of Shiraz to deal blows to oil by-product installations in the city. Our aircraft violently pounded these installations, setting them ablaze and leaving columns of smoke billowing from them.

3. At 2055 yesterday, our planes dealt destructive blows to the city of Dezful.

4. At the same time, our planes dealt a destructive blow to the city of Rasht.

5. At 2302 yesterday, our planes dealt a destructive blow to the city of Shiraz.

6. At 0730 today, our planes launched a destructive raid on the city of Kermanshah [Bakhtaran].

7. At 0830 today, our planes launched a destructive raid on military installations in the city of (Salahi).

8. At 0900 today, our planes dealt a violent blow to the city of Tabriz, in the far north of Iran.

9. At 1015 today, our planes raided the city of Mayana [Meydan] and pounded their targets.

10. At 1030 today, our planes dealt a devastating blow to the city of Ilam.

11. At 1007, our planes launched a devastating raid on the city of Maragheh.

12. At 1123, our planes launched another destructive raid on the city of (Salahi).

13. At 1400 today, our planes launched a destructive raid on the city of Kermanshah [Bakhtaran].

After completing all these missions, all our planes returned safely and victorious to base, in God's care and protection. God bless the men of our Air Force—commanders, hawks, officers, and other ranks—for this glorious struggle. Praise be to God, who grants us victory.

[Signed] The Armed Forces General Command, 17 March 1988

Communique No 3,082

JN171742 Baghdad Voice of the Masses in Arabic 1705 GMT 17 Mar 88

[Communique No 3,082 issued by the Armed Forces General Command on 17 March]

[Text] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. With their heroic activities, our units last night and today continued their confrontation of the aggressors as follows:

1. Our daring helicopter gunships affiliated with the Army aircraft continued their heroic activities in the areas of operation with 155 sorties, inflicting on our criminal enemies heavy losses in personnel, weapons, and equipment. Our planes then returned safely to base, praise be to God.

2. Our brave units in the I Army Corps northern sector dealt violent blows with artillery and other weapons to the enemy positions in front of them, achieving the following losses:

Killing 29 enemy personnel, burning 4 vehicles, destroying 1 107-mm rocket launcher and 1 heavy machinegun, blowing up 6 ammunition dumps, and destroying 3 infantry positions.

3. In the II Army Corps central sector, one enemy scoundrel was killed; four firing positions, one infantry position, and three observation posts were destroyed; one ammunition dump was blown up.

4. In the III Army Corps sector east of Al-Basrah, three enemy soldiers were killed and one ammunition dump was blown up.

5. Our brave units in the IV Army Corps sector east of Maysan yesterday used antiaircraft weapons to down an enemy plane which attempted to approach our positions.

The plane was seen falling ablaze inside Iranian territory. God bless our men of the antiaircraft weapons in the heroic IV Army Corps sector.

6. One of our units in the VII Army Corps sector spotted an enemy drone, fired at it, and downed it. In another area in the same sector, one enemy scoundrel was killed, one large vehicle was destroyed, and five ammunition dumps were blown up.

7. At 0741 and 1045 today, two enemy planes raided the towns of Kuysanjaq and Al-'Amadiyah, targeting the residential areas. A number of civilians, including women, old men, and children, were martyred and wounded and a number of houses, shops, and properties were damaged.

Last night and today, the criminal Iranian regime used long-range artillery to shell residential areas in the cities of Basra, Al-Sulaymaniyah, Al-Qurnah, Al-Zubayr, Badrah, Qal'at Salih, Khanaqin, Darband Khan, Qal'at Dizah, Al-'Uzayr, 'Arbad, Mandali, and the Bimalik housing complex.

As a result of the brutal shelling, a number of our dear citizens, including a number of children, women, and old men, were martyred and wounded and a number of houses, schools, mosques, shops, and properties were demolished and damaged. Mercy to our martyrs and swift recovery to our wounded, God willing.

[Signed] The Armed Forces General Command, 17 March 1988

Irbil Governorate Raided

JN171948 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1926 GMT 17 Mar 88

[Text] Baghdad, 17 Mar (INA)—Two Iranian planes raided the Governorate of Irbil, northern Iraq, at 1819 [1519 GMT] today, targeting residential areas. In a statement to INA tonight, a military spokesman said as a result of the raid, women, old men, and children were martyred and wounded and a number of houses, shops, and one mosque were also damaged.

24th Missile Strike on Tehran

JN180558 Baghdad Voice of the Masses in Arabic 0535 GMT 18 Mar 88

[Statement by a military spokesman dated 18 March]

[Text] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. The Iranian rulers continue to insist on war and aggression. They also insist on the war of the cities and continue to reject the UN Security Council resolution for ending the war and establishing peace.

They also continue to reject the implementation of the principles we have outlined for halting the war of the cities. From this premise, it is our right and our duty to use our superiority and our huge resources to punish the aggressors and have them desist from their evil.

In accordance with all this, the 24th missile strike was dealt against Tehran with Al-Husayn missiles at 0800 [0500 GMT] today.

May God, the people, and the leader bless your efforts, O men in the military industries and in the heroic Al-Husayn missile force. Proceed forward. God be with you.

[Dated] 18 March 1988

Nineveh, Shaykhan Hit

JN180651 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0632 GMT 18 Mar 88

[Text] Baghdad, 18 Mar (INA)—An Iranian aircraft raided the Nineveh Governorate center at 0848 [0548 GMT] today, and the Shaykhan district, 30 km northeast of the city, 2 minutes later.

An Iraqi military spokesman said that the enemy aircraft targeted residential areas in the two cities. He added that as a result of this raid, several citizens, including women and children, were martyred, several houses and shops were damaged, and one elementary school was demolished.

Communique Reports Strike

JN181054 Baghdad Voice of the Masses in Arabic 1012 GMT 18 Mar 88

[Communique No 3,083 issued by the Armed Forces General Command on 18 Mar 88]

[Text] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. When the enemies of the Arab nation and of Iraq provided the Iranian regime with a batch of their missiles, this regime lost no time in using them.

Evil intentions, deeply rooted in their minds and guiding their actions, make them exploit the first opportunity to commit aggression against our borders and to vent their longstanding hatred of our people, in addition to expressing their rancor toward the heroic Iraqi steadfastness confronting their schemes.

Inspired by the ideas, action, and struggle of the great leader, Iraq proves to them today that it has an unparalleled might. Having repulsed their aggression and defeated their schemes, Iraq proves to them that neither the prolongation of the war, the frustrated attempts here and there, nor the shelling of secure cities can affect its will. The opposite is true. Our country has become a mighty force that no force can face, particularly the clique of sedition and backwardness in Tehran.

To transform the prolongation of the war into a real calamity that will impose on them a premature defeat, the Al-Husayn missile force carried out six strikes against the city of Tehran alone.

Yes, six missiles at the same time, to transform this city into an inferno that will wipe out its devils and renegades and turn its rancor into ashes.

Our missile force carried out a missile strike against the city of Tehran at 0800 today. By this, we have carried out the 30th missile strike against Tehran since the Iranian regime reignited the war of cities.

Let the charlatans cry, lament, and raise a hue and cry. They have one of two choices: either return to a just peace or face death and destruction everywhere and at any time.

Glory and praise to the men of the military industries and to our men in the heroic Al-Husayn force. O men, you were inspired by the directives of the great leader and assimilated his knowledge. By doing so, you won God's blessings and the admiration of the world at large.

[Dated] 18 March 1988

Jets Hit Iranian Cities

JN181121 Baghdad Voice of the Masses in Arabic 1053 GMT 18 Mar 88

[Statement by a military spokesman dated 18 March]

[Text] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. Our daring Air Force continued to penetrate deep inside Iranian territory to deal devastating blows against the corrupt Khomeyniite heads, and to confirm to the backward Iranian regime that our blows will continue and become fiercer so long as it pursues its aggression against our territory and rejects peace.

Our Air Force carried out the following heroic missions:

1. At 1525 [1225 GMT] yesterday, our aircraft carried out a destructive raid against Dezful.

2. At 2100 yesterday, our aircraft carried out a violent raid against Kermanshah [Bakhtaran].

3. At 2230 yesterday, our aircraft carried out a destructive raid against Jaysan.

4. After midnight last night, our aircraft carried out two accurate and effective hits against two maritime targets, one a very large target and the second a large target, off the Iranian coast.

5. At 0800 today, our aircraft carried out a second raid against Jaysan.

6. At the same time, other aircraft carried out a devastating raid against Gilan-e Gharb.

7. At 0818 today, our aircraft carried out another raid against Dezful.

8. At 0830 today, our aircraft carried out a raid against (Salahi), pounding selected military targets.

9. At 0838, our aircraft carried out another destructive raid against Kermanshah.

10. At 0930 today, our aircraft carried out a raid against Ilam, pounding targets there.

May God bless our Air Force—commanders, officers, hawks, and other ranks. We thank God for these victories.

[Dated] 18 March 1988

Iranian Missile Hits Mosul

JN181219 Baghdad Voice of the Masses in Arabic 1200 GMT 18 Mar 88

[Statement by a military spokesman dated 18 March]

[Text] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. At 1308 [1008 GMT] today, the criminal Iranian regime fired one of the missiles that were supplied to it by the enemies of our beloved Iraq and of our Arab nation on the heroic city of Mosul.

The missile fell on a residential area, martyring and wounding several of our beloved citizens, including women, children, and elders. The missile also destroyed and damaged several houses and shops.

We ask God to have mercy on our martyrs and we wish speedy recovery for our wounded.

[Dated] 18 March 1988

Lloyds Confirms Tanker Hit

JN181314 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1235 GMT 18 Mar 88

[Text] London, 18 Mar (INA)—The British Lloyds insurance company reports that the Cypriot tanker "Copernicus" [name as received] was hit during an Iraqi Air Force raid at 2300 local yesterday. Lloyds said that fire broke out on the tanker after it was directly hit.

The Cypriot tanker weighs 41,992 tonnes. Its crew deserted it but some of them were wounded.

The Cypriot tanker is managed by the Tsakusi Shipping and Trading E.S. Piraeus [name as received].

The Iraqi spokesman had announced that Iraqi aircraft carried out a raid against maritime targets off the Iranian coast last night, hitting two tankers, one of them a very large target.

2 Iranian Planes Downed

JN181551 Baghdad Voice of the Masses in Arabic 1532 GMT 18 Mar 88

[Statement by a military spokesman dated 18 March]

[Text] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. At 0905 [0605 GMT] and at 1420 today, two enemy aircraft attempted to approach our forward units—the first an F-5 in the III Army Corps sector, and the second an F-4 in the I Army Corps sector.

Our air defenses destroyed and shot them down. They were seen crashing in flames in enemy territory. May God bless the personnel of our air defense in the I and III Army Corps.

[Dated] 18 March 1988

Attack Repulsed, 800 Killed

JN181625 Baghdad Voice of the Masses in Arabic 1602 GMT 18 Mar 88

[Statement by a military spokesman dated 18 March]

[Text] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. At 2400 [2100 GMT] yesterday, the enemy sent in a force in an abortive attempt to attack our units of the heroic Dhulfaqar forces in the central sector of the II Army Corps.

A heavy battle developed, in which infantry, armor, artillery, and support personnel heroically aquitted themselves. The enemy attack was beaten back and demolished, costing them 800 dead. Only those who fled the battle scene escaped. May God bless our men of the heroic Dhulfaqar forces and the fighters of the II Army Corps—commanders, officers, and other ranks. Thanks be to God for giving us victory.

[Dated] 18 March 1988

Briefs

Outgoing Vietnamese Ambassador

Taha Muhyi al-Din Ma'ruf, RCC member and vice president, this morning received Tran Van Thanh, ambassador of the SRV, on the end of his tenure. [Text] [*JN161628 Baghdad Domestic Service in Arabic 1500 GMT 16 Mar 88 JN*]

New Mauritanian Ambassador

Taha Yasin Ramadan, RCC member and first deputy prime minister, today received Yehdhih Ould Sidya Ahmed, ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, on the assumption of his new post. [Excerpt] [*JN162056 Baghdad Domestic Service in Arabic 1900 GMT 16 Mar 88 JN*]

Shamir Entourage Sees U.S. Visit as 'Victory'

TA180953 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 18 Mar 88 pp 1, 6

[Report on interview with Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir by Hayim Shibi, with the prime minister's entourage in the United States, and Tzadoq Yehezqeli in Washington on 17 March]

[Excerpt] "I do not foresee a possibility that I will change my stand on the international conference," Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir said yesterday in an interview with YEDI'OT AHARONOT.

Shamir concluded the official part of his visit to Washington and left for Los Angeles. His flat rejection of the international conference idea has created a difficult dilemma for the administration:

What will Secretary of State Shultz present to Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze in their meeting next week?

According to sources in Shamir's entourage, the secretary of state promised the prime minister that Israel will not receive a one-sided invitation to the conference: "We will not surprise you," Shultz told Shamir

The last meeting with Shultz yesterday morning brought only smiles to Shamir's entourage, and strengthened the feeling of the prime minister and his aides that the visit could even be called "a victory" for Shamir.

The sense of achievement in the Shamir camp emanated from a feeling of relief that "Shamir rejected the plan and nothing happened to us," as one source said, and in fact everything is still open.

Shamir told our correspondent in the United States: "I made my position very plain and clear."

On the question of whether Shultz will pay a return visit to Israel, Shamir replied:

"There is such a possibility. I do not know if he will decide to continue in his efforts. He will probably decide to go on. He may come. It depends on the reactions he receives from the Soviets and the Arabs."

[Question] When will he receive these responses?

[Shamir] "At the beginning of next week."

The prime minister refused to react directly to well-known columnist William Safire's proposal that he fire Vice Prime Minister Shim'on Peres.:

"This proposal is not new. We have to check and see what would happen afterward. I receive a lot of advice. I have still not decided."

[Question] Will you present the Inner Cabinet next week with a decision that will allow the Shultz initiative to continue?

[Shamir] "I undertook to convene the Inner Cabinet and brief it on what I did in the United States. I will do that." [passage omitted]

Reagan Remarks Called 'Warning'

TA171303 Tel Aviv HADASHOT in Hebrew 17 Mar 88 p 1

[Comment by Ilan Kfir: "A Clear-Cut Message"]

[Text] President Reagan yesterday made it unequivocally clear that the United States will not be able to accept the status quo, and will insist on the existence of the political process in its entirety.

"Those who will say 'no' to the U.S. plan—and the prime minister has not used this word—need not answer to us; they'll need to answer to themselves and their people," Reagan said, thus conveying a message of warning, of political and moral significance, to Prime Minister Shamir, and to a lesser extent to Jordan's King Husayn.

The President's remarks aroused a great deal of excitement in the Peres entourage, and rightly so. Reagan is resolute in his demand that the plan be accepted as a single package.

The prime minister is trying to eliminate part of the initiative and to strike the international conference off the agenda as a condition for examining the other components of the plan.

Reagan has diplomatically refrained from pushing Shamir into a corner, but left no room for doubt that the United States will be displeased if its initiative is rejected.

His remarks were not a slip of the tongue. Every word in the concluding statement was formulated with a great deal of care. It is too early to speak of a crisis, but if a way out is not found soon, a dangerous deterioration may occur in Israeli-U.S. relations.

Editorials View Shamir Trip

TA181153 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 0405 GMT 18 Mar 88

[Review of the morning press editorials]

[Excerpt] HA'ARETZ says that although so far there has been no confrontation or pressure, a negative answer to Shultz' initiative might bring them on. The United States has many effective ways of making its dissatisfaction felt.

Prime Minister Shamir should not take all the above too lightly. He will have to face the Israeli public without the benefit of America's goodwill, and will have to face the United States without the support of half the Israeli electorate. He is not to be envied.

HATZOFE writes that Israel should examine its policy and decide with eyes wide-open, and should not be afraid to say no to the Americans if it becomes apparent that Shultz' document contains proposals that could sabotage Israel's safety and security.

It would be better if the decision were not made under the blinding influence of the strife and contention between the Likud and Alignment, but in a responsible manner and taking the country's best interests into consideration.

The decision must be made with a view to the future, and not with the ballot boxes in mind.

'AL HAMISHMAR says that Shamir's visit to Washington ended in a budding conflict between Israel and the United States. At one time, the Arabs were thought to object to and reject solutions favorable to them.

Now it is Israel's position that might lead in the same direction—to letting a plan whose contents are the best we could attain under the present circumstances slip past us.

THE JERUSALEM POST writes that if Shamir already knows, as he probably does, that his final reply to the Americans will be the same as, or not better than, the one he has offered in Washington this week, he should stop playing games with the people and go ask them at once, at the polls, whether they too want a greater Israel at all costs. [passage omitted]

Peres Interviewed on Peace Plan, Shamir Visit

TA171646 Tel Aviv Educational Television in Hebrew 1500 GMT 17 Mar 88

[Interview with Shim'on Peres, vice prime minister and foreign minister, by Rafi Reshef—live]

[Excerpts] [Reshef] Good evening, Mr Peres.

[Peres] Good evening.

[Reshef] Let's discuss the current news. According to one evaluation, the prime minister plans to call on the Inner Cabinet to vote on a proposal to continue the process.

Would you have any problems supporting such a proposal?

[Peres] This is not news, but an evaluation; if it happens I will be very happy.

[Reshef] Will you support it?

[Peres] Support what?

[Reshef] A vague phrasing to continue the process, to continue the initiative.

[Peres] We will support everything that continues the process, because the main problem facing us is the peace process.

To tell the truth, I am skeptical about this evaluation, but if it proves correct I will be very happy.

[Reshef] Mr Peres, in view of your skepticism, do you plan to call on the Inner Cabinet to finally decide on this initiative?

[Peres] There is no doubt that the Inner Cabinet must make a decision. The prime minister made a commitment that on his return he will convene the Inner Cabinet, and it will have to make a decision. It is not a children's game.

[Reshef] Mr Peres, what is your general impression of the visit, the official part of which has just been completed. Has it advanced, postponed, or somehow changed the momentum surrounding the Shultz plan?

[Peres] I am very doubtful that it changed anything, and Mr Shamir says we are still at the starting point. We must remember that we have two problems here, not one:

Our relations with the United States is one of the problems. The main problem is what will happen in the Middle East. If the United States leaves the arena—and as President Reagan said, each leader will appear before his nation and be held accountable—we must ask ourselves, what will happen in the territories? How will things develop?

The rejectionist front will flex its muscles, there will be a return to the arms race, a return to escalation, to threats. Where will it end?

[Reshef] You said in this forum that Shamir says no all the time, but the Americans are saying Yitzhaq Shamir has held back from saying no.

[Peres] That is not exactly what he said. He said Shamir has not used the word no, but Mr Shamir got up after that and said he opposes an international conference. So he did use the word no.

[Reshef] But do you know why George Shultz is planning to return to the region?

[Peres] If he does return I believe it will be to advance the process, which in the final analysis means to convene an international conference. The United States has presented a timetable, and there is nothing casual about it.

It states that in April there will be an international conference; in May, direct negotiations will begin between us and a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation on an interim plan, which will continue for some 6 months; and in December direct negotiations will start. I believe the Americans cannot budge from this timetable.

[Reshef] But from what I gather, the only outstanding issue is the Jordanian-Palestinian delegation. Is this the reason for his return to the region?

[Peres] No. As far as Israel is concerned, the issue that must be clarified is the international conference. This is the basic reason for Shamir's opposition. I believe this opposition is wrong because it will cause us to lose Jordan. [Reshef] But we have heard that before. I am trying to look ahead. What do you think will happen?

Do you foresee a possibility that the U.S. secretary of state and the Soviets will together approach the UN secretary general, asking him to send various parties invitations to the international forum even on the assumption that Yitzhaq Shamir will not respond affirmatively to this invitation?

[Peres] Yes, if Shamir's answer is negative that is possible. In fact, what Reagan said last night is that if the answer is not no, they will consider it as affirmative. He said that as long as you do not utter the word no, we will continue the process. The Americans could then feel free to continue the process.

[Reshef] Is it absolutely clear to you that Husayn will accept such an invitation?

[Peres] I am not Husayn's spokesman. He has not rejected it so far, and I believe Husayn will be very, very careful not to reject it. I believe he will respond with a yes. That is, he will respond positively, and say that he wants certain items improved. But in general he will attend.

[Reshef] What do you believe he will want to improve? You say he will not buy the original plan as is. The Americans are always saying it is a unitary plan and they have no intention of changing details.

[Peres] I believe he will try to improve two or three things. In fact, he will try to do what the Syrian foreign minister said this morning when he expressed his opposition to the conference and the plan. He will want a conference with more powers; the Americans will respond negatively, but he will try.

He will ask for specific representation for the PLO, and will receive a negative answer. That is, he will try to advance his positions in several fields which he believes will improve his standing in the Arab world. But I think the Americans will not be able to accept his demands, just as they did not accept those of Mr Shamir.

[Reshef] If I understood you correctly, the bottom line is that Husayn will come to the international opening.

[Peres] Yes, sir. Definitely yes, that is my view. My view is that at present there is a time-out in the Middle East. You still have Husayn, Egypt, and the United States.

All this could evaporate. This is one reason why I try to persuade people that the time factor is urgent. But my impression now is that Husayn will come.

[Reshef] Since the time factor is so crucial, can you imagine a scenario whereby Shamir will reject the invitation and you will go?

[Peres] I do not like such speculation. You are slipping from the peace issue to the internal political dispute. This is not what interests me.

[Reshef] Setting aside the fact that you consider an international opening feasible despite Shamir's rejection, do you still want to have elections at once?

[Peres] It is no use for me to say the same thing over and over again. As long as the peace process stands a chance I do not want to have early elections. The moment it becomes clear that the peace process is over we will do everything we can to bring elections forward.

[Reshef] Indeed, you have said all this before. The question is whether an international opening without Shamir's compliance falls in the category of a continuation of the peace process.

[Peres] The entire government, not just half of it, must agree on an international conference—that much is as clear as day. Shamir, myself, all of us together must agree on it. If that is not possible, we should ask the people—that much is clear, too.

[Reshef] Assuming an international opening does not fall in that category, do you foresee any breakthrough that will promote the initiative?

[Peres] Look, sometimes your questions and those of your colleage make us look like we are a country without any chances. This is not so. Many things were said to have no chances. Look at this past year: The international conference was proclaimed dead and people said there would be no peace conference; the entire process received heart-rending eulogies.

We persisted and I insisted, and you can see for yourself that it did not turn out that way; the process is alive and kicking. We had a similar argument about Tabah and Lebanon. The argument does not disturb me. As long as as the door is slightly ajar, as long as there is a crack, I will fight to move in the direction of peace. I am sure many people do not even begin to understand the difficulties that would stand at our door without such a process.

[Reshef] In theory it makes sense to take advantage of that crack but it seems that my colleagues and I fail to detect one.

[Peres] You failed for a year, but you see that the process is alive and kicking. You see that what I said a year ago has not changed today, and you also see that Mr Shamir went to great lengths to utter a no. I think it is a mistake to believe that in the absence of an international conference we will be spared pressure.

On the contrary, in the absence of an international conference Israel will experience numerous pressures. I will fight as long as there is a chance, but the moment it becomes clear that there is no chance, I will suggest that we approach the people and ask them to decide.

[Reshef] Are you at the point of suggesting that yet?

[Peres] We are talking in terms of days and weeks. We know we still have the current month and that if nothing happens next month, that will be it. There is nothing to wait for after that. Afterward, one would have to wait 1 or 2 years, or even longer; I do not know for how long.

[Reshef] Then you would proceed at the highest speed possible.

[Peres] Then we would proceed at the highest speed possible, because it would be a shame to waste 1988. I want to tell you that what is happening in the territories also bothers us. We not only have to deal with the consequences of the events in the territories, but also with the reasons for what is happening there.

I do not know, nobody knows what will happen in the territories, but we all know that the hope for a comfortable and pleasant coexistence and for coming to terms with the situation will apparently not be restored. Even the settlers had hoped for coexistence, but all this has apparently gone away forever. We are presently experiencing a serious confrontation and it is hard to tell the form it will take.

As far as the United States is concerned, our problem is not with the administration but with public opinion; we also have a problem with European public opinion. I am also anxious at the prospect of the fundamentalists, extremists, rejectionists, and warmongers in the Arab world becoming stronger.

[Reshef] With your permission, I would like to go back to the United States and Ronald Reagan's statement that those who say no will be held accountable by their people. It seems to me that to a large extent it resembles your own statements, including your remarks in the Knesset yesterday. Is the United States overdoing its involvement in an actual bid to influence the Israeli voter?

[Peres] Look, you can give up on the United States. What do you want from me? Israel is in a very special situation. When wars are the issue we say we do not want American soldiers, but when peace is involved we say we want American diplomats. You must take it or leave it, you cannot have both. You cannot say come and help us make peace in the Middle East....

[Reshef, interrupting] Still, do you think Reagan's statement went beyond acceptable norms?

[Peres] In what way? You know, when Carter was here he said something far worse than that. Speaking in Jerusalem, he said: You have good people but bad leaders.

We are asking the Americans to help us bridge the differences. They say they are willing, but that if we are not willing we will be held accountable by our people. What do you want them to say? They are not saying that the U.S. Congress will hold us accountable.

[Reshef] Still, there is the London document signed in April 1987. In fact, the issue of an international conference, an opening and so forth, comes from there. You kept the Americans in the picture.

When the document was signed, the Americans approached Shamir and he said no; the process subsequently came to a halt. The question is: In hindsight is it not a pity that the Americans did not strike while the iron was hot?

[Peres] Yes, it is a real pity. It is a pity that Yitzhaq Shamir sent Moshe Arens to Shultz without my knowledge; Arens asked Shultz not to come here and told him that this was an internal Israeli affair. We wasted 1 year. I think that as far as Israel is concerned, the London document is far more convenient than the current one.

It may very well be that had we started the negotiations then, we would have spared ourselves all the incidents in Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza. It is a real pity. I do not know whether it will be easier a year from now. The situation is not static and is constantly changing in one direction or another. [passage omitted]

[Reshef] Let us assume that elections are brought forward, and let us even assume the Alignment wins. I assume that even you do not believe you will be able to form anything more than a narrow-based or a minority government. Do you think you will then be able to promote the initiative without having half the nation rebelling, God forbid?

[Peres] Yes. All big decisions in our history or the history of other nations were made by a negligible majority. Coalitions are usually good for times of emergency, but for political decisions you must suffice with a small majority.

Take the establishment of the State of Israel, for example. I remember that in 1946 Ben-Gurion was certain he had only a minority. He wanted to stalk out of the Zionist Congress and we had to dissuade him from doing so. Had we more time I would tell you the whole story.

[Reshef] Let us go back to the Camp David Accords. After all, without the Alignment it is highly doubtful that they would have been approved.

[Peres] The Likud was split on the Camp David Accords. Mr Arens and others were against them, and there was a slim majority then, too. We keep on repeating the same mistakes.

Most decisions, such as the withdrawal from the Sinai and the reparations paid by Germany, were passed by a slim majority. A democratic regime is based on a majority, and nowhere is it written that it should be a large majority. Some issues require a large majority, such as changing the election system. [passage omitted]

Says Cabinet Decision Next Step

TA171247 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1105 GMT 17 Mar 88

[Excerpt] Vice Prime Minister Shim'on Peres believes Yitzhaq Shamir's mission to the United States did not change anything and that a decision about the peace process must be made immediately. Minister Peres appeared before Jerusalem high school students this morning. His remarks are brought to us by our political correspondent 'Oded Ben-'Ami:

[Begin recording] [Ben-'Ami] It has recently become fashionable for ministers to use high schools as a platform and eighth graders as an audience for expressing their views and getting feedback on topical issues.

This morning Vice Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres met with eighth graders studying at ORT institutes in Jerusalem. The first question was on the results of the prime minister's mission to the United States. Peres replied:

[Peres] The United States remained firm in its positions, Mr Shamir stuck to his positions, and the cabinet does not have a decision. The next step must be for the cabinet to make a decision. I can only say that the problem is not over this or that trip or over political parties.

If you ask me, my gut feeling is that beyond all the differences, all the applause, all the superficiality, and even beyond the current trend in Israel to appeal to base feelings, there is at present a time-out in the Middle East which could perhaps be used to start the peace process, or this opportunity could pass in a flash, never to return. I believe the Middle East would then turn again toward escalation, an arms race, hatred, and deterioration. This is the central problem. [passage omitted] [end recording]

Assesses Reagan Remarks

TA171221 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1130 GMT 17 Mar 88

[Text] Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres views President Reagan's remarks as an opening for continuing the peace process. The U.S. President's statement that he has still not heard a negative answer from Prime Minister Shamir should be viewed with optimism, Peres said.

Our correspondent Ofer Bardugo brings us Shim'on Peres' remarks to high school students in Jerusalem:

[Begin Peres recording] If the Americans leave the arena, the option of negotiations will disappear. They cannot be replaced, and we will wait a long time—a year or two—until another U.S. administration comes [words indistinct] what mood there will be in the Middle East.

But from a diplomatic viewpoint, there is no doubt that when Reagan said he noted that Shamir did not use the word no, he was leaving himself room for action in the future. [end recording]

Arens Foresees Possible Changes in Shultz Plan

TA181210 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1100 GMT 18 Mar 88

[Report by Dov Gilhar from Ben-Gurion Airport "a short time ago"—recorded]

[Text] [Gilhar] MK Arens is the first member of the prime minister's entourage to the United States to return to Israel. He definitely foresees changes in the U.S. plan. Let us hear an excerpt of his remarks:

[Arens] I think the prime minister's position is clear to the Americans. My feeling is that the secretary of state still wants to pursue his efforts and was encouraged by Shamir to pursue them.

I suppose that under the present circumstances, this entails at least contemplating the possibility of introducing changes.

[Gilhar] Professor Arens, how do you interpret or understand President Reagan's statement that the leader who says no will be held accountable by his own people?

[Arens] I think there is no need for interpretations. There is only one democratic state in the Middle East, the State of Israel. The United States is a democratic state, and the President knows, just as we do, that in democratic states, governments are first and foremost accountable to their citizens.

2 Soldiers Sentenced in Live Burial Incident

TA180838 Jerusalem Domestic Service in English 0500 GMT 18 Mar 88

[Text] Two soldiers charged with partially burying alive four Arabs in the village of Salim last month have been convicted and sentenced in the Yafo military court.

Private Ya'ir Nisimi received a prison term of 2 and 1/2 months with a 7-and-1/2-month suspended sentence; Pvt Dror Segen-Kohen received 2 months in jail with a 7-month suspended sentence.

The two defendants pleaded guilty to improper conduct in a plea-bargaining agreement with the prosecution, after the charge of abuse was dropped. A third soldier involved in the incident, Sergeant Major Charlie Danino, pleaded not guilty.

[Jerusalem Television Service in Hebrew at 1900 GMT on 17 March adds that "the sentences pend the court's approval, and will be issued in its next session."]

IDF Opens Fire on Area Outside Security Zone

TA181055 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1030 GMT 18 Mar 88

[Text] IDF artillery guns opened fire this morning on a wadi outside the security zone where a terrorist gang was suspected to be hiding, our correspondent Menahem Horowitz learned from UNIFIL sources at noon today.

Most of the fire was directed at areas south of the village of Shaqra, outside the security zone.

IDF Spokesman on Incident in Journalist's House

TA172119 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 2100 GMT 17 Mar 88

[Text] In reaction to reports about the incident that took place in journalist Jamil Hamid's home in Bethlehem, the IDF spokesman says a senior officer arrived at Hamid's house within an hour after the incident was reported.

It turned out that a firebomb had been thrown from Hamid's backyard, which is why soldiers went in to search his house. During an investigation conducted by the senior officer in the presence of Jamil Hamid and his wife, the latter admitted the conduct of the commanding officer had been flawless. Her only complaint had been that one of the soldiers insulted her; the senior officer apologized for this.

The IDF spokesman issued this reaction in the wake of Knesset Member Yitzhaq Artzi's complaint that an IDF force had invaded the journalist's house and in his absence had beaten his mother and destroyed the contents of the house.

IDF Holds 'Large-Scale Staff Exercise'

TA181101 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1000 GMT 18 Mar 88

[Text] The IDF held a large-scale staff exercise last week with the participation of the chief of staff, his deputy, the commanders of regional commands, and the chiefs of the air force and navy.

The exercise, which was closely followed by the defense minister, reviewed battle procedures and combat doctrines, and involved hundreds of reserve soldiers.

Gaza Banker on Economic Effects of Sanctions

TA171422 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 17 Mar 88 p 2

[Interview With Hashim al-Shawwa, head of the Falastin Bank in Gaza and chairman of the Gaza Fruit Growers Association, by Yerah Tal]

[Text] [Tal] Did you try to telephone abroad yesterday?

[Al-Shawwa] No, because I did not need to. In the next few days, however, I will certainly have to call for business reasons, at least to Cairo, where our bank has an office.

[Tal] Will the effort to block telephone calls abroad seriously affect your businesses?

[Al-Shawwa] I do not need to make a lot of telephone calls abroad for business, so it will not have a serious effect. Our commercial ties abroad were much more developed in the past. We used to export citrus to Europe, especially Eastern Europe. Some 25 percent of our produce used to be exported there, but since the Israeli authorities imposed restrictions on us our exports to Europe have been cut to 6 percent.

Most of our produce is currently being marketed to the West Bank, and over the Jordan River bridges to the Arab countries. This marketing channel has not yet been hit. The connection between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip has still not been cut.

I hope the authorities will be wise enough not to do that. It is possible the restrictions imposed on the Jordan bridge crossings will harm business, but so far this has not happened.

In banking, we do not have any international business because of various restrictions. Our size has been cut down to that of a local bank, and that is why preventing foreign telephone calls does not have a major effect on us. Other restrictions harm our business, however, such as a slowdown in issuing licenses to build the bank's central branch in the Gaza Strip.

[Tal] So did the economic sanctions implemented by the Military Administration affect other businessmen in the Gaza Strip?

[Al-Shawwa] Our economy was in bad shape before the economic sanctions. But there is no doubt the economic situation in the past 3 months has deteriorated to a level previously unknown. For instance, my bank had to return bounced checks to the tune of $10 million.

[Tal] How many businesses went bankrupt?

[Al-Shawwa] There have not been any bankruptcies in the legal sense. But people just stop doing business or cut down to a minimum; this can be seen by the bounced checks.

[Tal] Is there a chance the sanctions will lead to an end to the rebellion in the territories?

[Al-Shawwa] I do not think so. They only add fuel to the fire in the territories. The system of collective punishment only worsens the situation and complicates it even more.

[Tal] What do the merchants whose businesses have been hit live on? Are there any funds from here or abroad that support them financially?

[Al-Shawwa] As a banker I can tell you that they are dipping into their savings. Some are being assisted by relatives, although there is a problem here also:

Because of the restrictions imposed on the inhabitants of the territories they cannot bring in more than 400 dinars on their return from Jordan, instead of the 2,000 dinars permitted in the past.

This, by the way, pushed the value of the dinar up from 4.8 to 5.15 shekels. Most of the inhabitants are just making do with little. There are no incidents of hunger, but the longer the sanctions continue there is no doubt the condition of the inhabitants will worsen; who knows how far it will deteriorate?

[Tal] Those in the cabinet who support economic sanctions claim it is better to hit the inhabitants of the territories in their pocketbooks than on the head. What do you think about this alternative?

[Al-Shawwa] All collective punishment is unethical, unjust, and cruel. Just as violence backfires, so do economic sanctions since the Israeli Administration is losing revenues from taxes not collected from the inhabitants of the territories. When there is no business there are no taxes.

Gaza Lawyer Arrested for 'Subversive' Activities

TA180824 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 0700 GMT 18 Mar 88

[Excerpt] Muhammad Abu Sha'ban, deputy chairman of the Gaza Bar Association, has been placed under administrative detention for 6 months.

The IDF spokesman said this morning that Abu Sha'ban was arrested on suspicion of having engaged in subversive hostile activities, and denied that the arrest was connected with Abu Sha'ban's participation in a rally at Tel Aviv University yesterday. [passage omitted]

More on Unrest, Related Incidents in Territories

Curfew Imposed in Jabalyah

TA171723 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1700 GMT 17 Mar 88

[Excerpts] A curfew has been imposed on the Jabalyah refugee camp in the Gaza Strip following the incident in which 'Adi Tzabari, a resident of Ashqelon, was wounded by gunfire. [passage omitted]

A short time ago, our correspondent learned from the hospital in Ashqelon that an Arab from the Gaza Strip who sustained gunshot wounds had arrived for treatment. There are no details as yet on the circumstances of the incident.

[Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew at 1700 GMT adds: "Relative calm prevailed today in Judaea and Samaria. There were several disturbances in the Qalandiyah refugee camp and the village of Hawwarah on the outskirts of Nabulus. A curfew remains in force in the town of Qalqilyah."]

Janin Curfew Lifted 17 Mar

TA171255 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1200 GMT 17 Mar 88

[Excerpts] The curfew imposed this morning on the town of Janin was lifted a short while ago. Our correspondent Gabi Zohar reports that during the curfew the police detained several dozen residents suspected of provoking and participating in riots. [passage omitted]

In the Jabalyah refugee camp a local truck driver tried to run over a soldier this morning. Our correspondent Moti Amir reports that the soldier jumped aside, saving his life. The truck sped away. [passage omitted]

Sanctions Imposed on Janin

TA180530 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 0500 GMT 18 Mar 88

[Text] The IDF has imposed economic sanctions on the residents of Janin. Our correspondent Gabi Zohar reports that for the past 3 days the IDF has been preventing the marketing of agricultural produce from Janin to Israel and the transfer of goods from Israel to Janin.

Janin businessmen are complaining of being in financial difficulties because Israelis are taking advantage of the riots and not paying for electrical appliances purchased in the city months ago.

Arrests Made Prior to Land Day

TA171926 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1900 GMT 17 Mar 88

[Text] The IDF this week started an extensive operation of preemptive arrests in the territories prior to Land Day [30 March]. Our military correspondent Karmela Menashe reports that it involves the arrests of inciters; dozens have already been arrested.

Those arrested in Gaza and southern Judaea will be brought to a new detention center opened this week near Qezi'ot.

Pro-Iraqi Leaflet Distributed

TA180538 Jerusalem Domestic Service in English 0500 GMT 18 Mar 88

[Text] Yet another leaflet has been distributed in Arab villages in the territories. The leaflet expresses support for the Ba'th Party in Iraq and Iraqi President Saddam Husayn. The leaflet also calls for an increase in the armed struggle against Israel.

Reporter Steve Rodan says that a flurry of leaflets have appeared in the past few days, signed by groups with foreign backing. Military sources said the leaflets signify a power struggle between various Palestinian groups in the territories which want to take credit for the recent unrest.

Official Meets PLO Figure

TA171317 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 17 Mar 88 p 2

[Report by political correspondent 'Aqiva Eldar]

[Text] The resignation of Efrayim Sene from the leadership of the Civilian Administration and his replacement by an officer who is not at home with the authentic leadership in the West Bank was the main reason for the riots in the territories.

This was claimed in a meeting with a senior government personality by a PLO leader in the territories who belongs to the "Group of 13" which includes Sari Nusaybah, Hanna Sinyurah, and Fayiz Abu Rahmah.

The meeting was held secretly last month, even without the knowledge of Shmu'el Goren, coordinator of activities in the territories, who is in the habit of forbidding officials and even ministers to meet with PLO supporters in the territories.

At Goren's recommendation, Defense Minister Yitzhaq Rabin also refrained from meeting with members of this group, which is considered the most prominent faction of the leadership in the territories.

During the talk the senior Israeli official was reminded that the riots began shortly after Sene's retirement. The Palestinian leader claimed this indicated to the leadership and residents that chances for a dialogue with Israel had come to naught, since Sene was the only one in the defense establishment leadership who was particular about maintaining links with the young leaders affiliated with the moderate stream in Fatah.

He also contended that shortly after the riots broke out, close links were forged between the youths active in the area and the more adult leadership.

4 Killed in 16 Mar Riots

TA171114 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 17 Mar 88 pp 1, 2

[Report by Joel Greenberg and Bradley Burston]

[Excerpts] Four Palestinians died and at least six were wounded yesterday in serious rioting in the Tulkarm area, as Palestinians observed the second day of a general strike called by the "United National Leadership of the Uprising."

A major clash occurred at the Nur al-Shams refugee camp near Tulkarm, where residents tried to pull down a wire-mesh fence erected in front of the camp this week to deter stone-throwing.

Local sources said a huge crowd of residents set up rock barricades on the road in front of the camp to stop army jeeps, while they tried to bring down the fence.

A patrol that arrived at the scene was pelted with rocks. The troops fired tear gas and later shot at the rioters, wounding at least six, two of them seriously, according to military sources.

Sources in Tulkarm said 23 gunshot victims were brought to the local hospital, after the troops opened fire at the rioters. They said clashes erupted at the hospital when the wounded arrived, and troops fired tear gas to disperse the protesters.

The two seriously wounded were taken to Israeli hospitals, and one, who was shot in the head, died of his wounds at Hadassah Hospital in 'En Kerem, according to Palestinian sources. They identified him as Ashraf Mahmud Ibrahim, 25. [passage omitted]

A period of relative quiet in the Gaza Strip was shattered when violent unrest erupted throughout the region yesterday.

In the refugee camp of Khan Yunus, two residents were wounded by gunfire late yesterday, one seriously, after large numbers of youths spilled into the streets, violating curfew restrictions imposed earlier in the day.

Arriving on the scene, soldiers attempted to disperse the surging crowd with tear gas, rubber bullets, and shots fired into the air. As the crowd continued to advance, throwing bottles and rocks at the troops, soldiers opened fire, aiming at the legs of the demonstrators.

The seriously injured man, shot in the neck, was flown to Soroka Hospital for surgery. A Soroka spokeswoman said that the man, 29, had suffered fractures of the upper spine.

Doctors at Ahali Hospital in Gaza city told THE JERUSALEM POST that 10 other cases of gunshot wounds had been admitted during the day, three from the Jabalyah refugee camp. The IDF spokesman said that he could neither confirm nor deny the reports.

Scores of refugee camp residents were hospitalized at Ahali, nasa [as published], and Al-Shiafa Hospitals, complaining of beatings and reactions to tear gas, doctors said.

Violent disturbances were also reported in Dayr al-Balah, in Al-Nusayrat, and in several Gaza City neighbourhoods, where petrol bombs were thrown at IDF patrols. No injuries to soldiers were reported.

In marked contrast to the mixed response to Tuesday's general strike, participation in yesterday's strike was nearly total, with a negligible number of workers commuting to jobs in Israel.

1 Dead, Others Wounded in Gaza

TA181417 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew
1400 GMT 18 Mar 88

[Text] One man was killed and two wounded at the Al-Shati' refugee camp after prayers in the mosques today. Nevertheless, our correspondent Moti Amir has learned from local hospitals that 21 wounded people reached them from the Al-Shati' refugee camp. The IDF is investigating whether or not they were wounded by IDF fire.

Another person was wounded in the Sabra neighborhood in Gaza. It was reported that in most places in the Gaza Strip worshippers dispersed quietly, although there were several disturbances which required IDF's intervention.

An Egged bus that was traveling to Baqa al-Gharbiyah was stoned in the village of Jatt in the Triangle at noon. There were no casualties, but one of its windshields was smashed. Our correspondent Yo'el Dar reports that the police detained eight suspects, all of them from Arab villages in Samaria.

Two minors were detained in Umm al-Fahm on suspicion of having painted hostile slogans and having hoisted the PLO flag. The Valleys District police are continuing to investigate the circumstances of arson in two Jewish National Fund's forest plots yesterday. Nobody has been detained so far.

Ashqelon Resident Wounded

TA171638 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew
1600 GMT 17 Mar 88

[Text] 'Adi Tzabari, a resident of Ashqelon, was shot and wounded near the Jabalyah refugee camp. Two men shot him with a pistol and a Kalashnikov rifle, inflicting medium wounds. The attackers shot him while he was working, then escaped into an orange plantation.

Tzabari managed to drive himself to an army checkpoint and was later transferred to a hospital in Ashqelon. The security forces have started a search.

Former Hebron Mayor Barred From Belgium Trip

TA172122 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew
2100 GMT 17 Mar 88

[Text] The Civilian Administration in Judaea and Samaria has banned Mustafa 'Abd al-Nabi al-Natshah, the former mayor of Hebron, from leaving for Belgium. Al-Natshah wanted to attend an international conference on the Palestinian problem and peace that is scheduled to open in Brussels tomorrow.

The conference is being organized by Claude Cheysson, the former French minister of external relations, and will be attended by Jewish figures, Israeli Knesset members, and Palestinians from the territories and from all over the world.

Our correspondent Arye Gus was told that Al-Natshah has been banned from leaving for Europe due to his support for the armed struggle, a support which he has in the past voiced in interviews in the media.

UN's Haegglund Cited on Higgins Whereabouts

NC180805 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 0750 GMT 18 Mar 88

[Text] UNIFIL Commander General Gustav Haegglund has confirmed the statement made 2 days ago by UN Under Secretary General Marrack Goulding. Goulding said that U.S. Lieutenant Colonel Higgins, who was kidnapped a month ago, is being held in an area north of Al-Litani.

Haegglund added that this area is outside UNIFIL's deployment zone, and that it is quite impossible to operate there.

The UNIFIL commander went on to describe the kidnapping as well planned, saying that it was carried out by professionals who used many cars.

Ivory Coast Decides To Close Embassy 21 Mar

NC180655 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0615 GMT 18 Mar 88

[Text] The embassy of the Ivory Coast in Lebanon will be closed as of Monday [21 March]. The Ivorian authorities are apprehensive about the dangers posed to their diplomats, which in turn could also affect Lebanese nationals in the Ivory Coast.

It is noteworthy that their embassy had been previously attacked twice, prompting the Ivory Coast to decide to close it. However, this decision was then reversed following measures to safeguard the diplomats and the embassy building.

Rohani Confirms 'Imminent' Release of Al-Sadr

PM171627 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 13 Mar 88 pp 1, 2

[Zaki Musa Report: "Condemning Tehran and Its Rulers, Rohani Tells AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT: My Sources Emphasize Musa al-Sadr's Imminent Return"]

[Excerpts] Ayatollah Mehdi Rohani, spiritual leader of the Shi'ites in Europe, has confirmed the imminent return of Imam Musa al-Sadr, [former] chairman of the Higher Islamic Shi'ite Council in Lebanon who disappeared in late September 1978. And, since the issue is of a sensitive diplomatic and political nature, it should be dealt with carefully.

During a London telephone call to his residence in Paris, Ayatollah Rohani told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that "reliable figures have conveyed to me reports that Imam al-Sadr is still alive, and that he could meet with these figures on the 20th of this month. These figures are expected to provide me with tangible evidence to confirm their information and the past complications that have accompanied the case." [passage omitted]

Rohani confirmed that this source is an important one, and that he has no doubts about its information:

"I have announced the good news to my Lebanese relatives via a statement which the French Press Agency broadcast the following day. It did not take long before Lebanese leaders from various sects began to contact me for confirmation. Mrs Rabab al-Sadr, sister of Imam Musa, has contacted me, and I have assured her regarding the confirmations I have received."

Rohani added: Last Monday my sources contacted me and confirmed all that had been published in my name, thus boosting my confidence concerning my previous announcements.

As to whether he has had contacts with Imam Musa al-Sadr or tangible evidence that he is still alive, Rohani said: The 20th of this month is approaching; it is a fixed date which could be an occasion to announce some tangible evidence.

He said that the issue of Musa al-Sadr, who founded the Amal Movement, is not being raised on a personal basis, since the appearance of the man would cause important changes in both Lebanon and the region.

Besides, his release is chiefly linked to the demolition of prisons in Libya.

Concerning the accusations and campaigns that he was exposed to in Lebanon from some parties, especially Hizballah, Ayatollah Rohani said: To me, Hizballah in Lebanon represents two parties—the Lebanese Hizballah and the Iranian Hezbollah. Let the Lebanese party alone. The Iranian party should return to Iran to work and build there, since Lebanon has suffered enough ordeals and disasters.

Rohani went on to say: I have no personal disputes with Khomeyni, but I differ with him over his work method, fatwa [Islamic rulings], and his concept of building the state.

The Shi'ite leader, who holds a doctorate in philosophy from the Sorbonne University and was a professor at the Qom Seminary, concluded his statements by emphasizing that he has no political ambition in Lebanon or anywhere else. His interest, he said, is based on purely family considerations. [passage omitted]

DFLP Threatens To Retaliate Against Israel

NC180557 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0525 GMT 18 Mar 88

[Text] The DFLP has threatened to retaliate for yesterday's Israeli raid against a DFLP center in 'Alayh. The DFLP said its retaliatory action will be carried out inside Israel.

Meanwhile, a DFLP spokesman said that a 2-story building housing the Front's base in 'Aynab received a direct hit from an air-to-surface missile.

9 February Group Claims Attack on Syrian Center

NC180821 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 0745 GMT 18 Mar 88

[Text] The Khalil 'Akkawi unit of the 9 February organization has claimed responsibility for detonating an explosive charge in a Syrian occupation forces' center on Al-Arz Street in Tripoli at 1930 last night. A spokesman for organization said that the Syrian forces opened fire indiscriminately shortly after the explosion.

Palestinian CP Official Disappears in South

NC172024 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 2015 GMT 17 Mar 88

[Text] A security source has said that Ahmad Ghunaym, a Palestinian Communist Party official in south Lebanon, disappeared under mysterious circumstances yesterday after inspecting the party's positions in the Al-Qasimiyah area.

4 Gunmen Beat Up Greek Orthodox Priest

NC180837 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 0800 GMT 18 Mar 88

[Text] Four unidentified gunmen broke into the house of Archimandrite Alexi Mufarrij in Al-Ashrafiyah [in East Beirut] last night. The archimandrite is a priest of Beirut parish. The gunmen gagged him and then beat him up, inflicting injuries.

The information office of the Greek Orthodox Bishopric has issued a statement condemning the incident. The statement says, sarcastically:

The four youths who attacked the priest in his home in Al-Ashrafiyah, when they could not find an enemy to harm, exhibited unmatched chivalry. They took the priest as their enemy, broke into his house, and committed their shameful act.

The statement called on officials and those who claim to protect security, justice, and individual safety to rise up and take action to ensure the safety of the citizens.

Briefs

Hungarian Ambassador Received

President Amin al-Jummayil received the credentials of new Hungarian Ambassador Jozsef Kertesz today. [Excerpt] [*NC171734 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 1630 GMT 17 Mar 88*]

Iranian Ambassador Holds News Conference

JN172142 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 2115 GMT 17 Mar 88

[Text] Damascus—Hojjat ol-Eslam Mohammad Hasan Akhtari, ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Damascus, has reiterated that his country does not seek to pose a threat to anybody and that it covets no territory in any Arab state.

In a press conference yesterday, attended by a number of Arab and foreign journalists, he said his country desires to maintain good relations with its neighboring Gulf states. He added his country does not harbor any bad intentions toward these states and that it does not covet an inch of Iraqi territory.

He referred to the failed attempts and conspiracies hatched by the United States to impose a reconciliation on Iran, beginning with the deployment of war fleets in the region and ending with the measures carried out in complicity with its allies like Britain and other states, as they asked the Iraqi regime to attack cities using missiles and planes—a matter that forced us to reply in a decisive and deterrent manner.

The Iranian ambassador affirmed that his country supports any proposal that calls for ending the war of cities.

Commentary on U.S. 'Double Role,' Shamir Visit

JN171518 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1130 GMT 17 Mar 88

[Station commentary]

[Text] U.S. Administration officials have competed in making statements supporting, encouraging, and reassuring Israel and their terrorist guest Yitzhaq Shamir. They did not pay any attention to the concern and anxiety expressed by world public opinion and international organizations about the explosive situation in the region shown clearly in the violent unequal battles in the occupied territory.

Terrorist Shamir, who went to Washington amid Zionist media clamor about the possibility of being subjected to U.S. pressures, has been warmly welcomed amid clear U.S. fear of speaking to this terrorist about the ugly crimes being committed by the occupation forces in the occupied Arab territories.

The U.S. President, his secretary of state, and other U.S. officials all chose words and phrases which encourage the Zionists to adhere to their aggressive expansionist policy and avoided warning them about the results of such a policy.

The statements by the U.S. officials centered on the following two issues: Firstly, the full and irrevocable U.S. support for what is called Israel's need for security and support and its need to implement all measures to defend this alleged security.

Secondly, complete U.S. acceptance of plans presented by Israel to reach a solution and settlement, headed by direct negotiations, deleting the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, rejecting the international conference formula, and working in accordance with partial settlements.

Yesterday, U.S. President Reagan announced that the U.S. policy stipulates guaranteeing Israel's security and that he will not put pressure on Israel. U.S. Secretary George Shultz also announced that Israel's strength is the cornerstone in the peace process.

These statements stress Israel's alleged security; that is, the Zionist policy of Zionist expansion, the settlement proposed by Israel, and all the Zionist entity's terrorist acts and policies. By the warm U.S. welcome of terrorist Shamir and the U.S. statements encouraging and supporting the Zionist entity's acts against the Arab nation, peace, and international organizations, the Americans explicitly revealed that the true identity of Shultz' initiative is more of a Zionist-Israeli one than an American one.

The U.S. Administration did not deal with terrorist Shamir as one of the Zionist officials responsible for the massacres in the occupied Arab territories and as a Zionist responsible for the obstacles hampering the peace process, a just solution, and the convocation of an international conference. In fact, it dealt with him as an ally and eager to satisfy him.

The clear and apparent contradiction in the U.S. Administration's policy is that it talks about peace, but encourages the Zionist terrorists. It also talks about an international conference, but adopts the Israeli stand of undermining the international conference, emptying it of its content and authorities, and erasing the international role in this conference.

While Washington shows an interest in the Palestinian people's rights, it considers our people's uprising against the occupations acts of disturbance and considers Israel's crimes against our kinfolk legitimate acts to restore order and security in the occupied territories.

The United States cannot go on playing this double role indefinitely, because this role entails significant dangers for this sensitive area of the world. This role encourages Israel to adopt arrogant stands, defy international resolutions and organizatons, and commit the ugliest bloody crimes.

Our kinfolk's uprising in the occupied homeland, the wide-scale support it enjoys, and the international unanimity on the convocation of an international conference and establishment of a just peace is very clear evidence that the U.S. role has lost any credibility. This is because the United States exercises nothing but an Israeli policy in the Middle East.

U.S. Seeking To 'Stampede' Arabs Toward Plan

JN181440 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1133 GMT 18 Mar 88

[Station commentary]

[Text] Shortly after the conclusion of his talks with the enemy prime minister, Yitzhaq Shamir, U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz renewed the call for support for his Mideast initiative. During his talks with American officials, Shamir reiterated his rejection of the proposed international conference, which he said will force Israel to pull out of the occupied Arab land—something he maintains is national suicide.

Shamir has contended that Mideast peace will come once the Arabs accept the necessity of peacefully coexisting with Israel. According to Shamir's argument, only when Israel is strong will the Arabs resign themselves to peaceful coexistence with it.

In short, Shamir will settle for nothing less than gobbling up the occupied land, carrying on with Israel's hostile, expansionist policies, and coercing the Arabs into submission, using the power liberally supplied by the United States.

Washington even shares Tel Aviv's argument that peace is underpinned by Israel's might and their strategic alliance, which has developed to unprecedented levels since President Reagan was voted into office 7 years ago.

If American officials have made it quite clear that they will not bring pressure to bear on Shamir to bring him round to Shultz' plan and that at the same time they will not abandon this initiative, what are we to make of the U.S. secretary of state's call for support for his initiative and at whom is the call aimed?

Indeed, what purpose is served by Washington's pursuing its efforts? The underlying aims of Shultz' call are not hard to discern. The United States is seeking to stampede the Arabs into embracing its initiative as the only option leading to a solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

In effect, the Arabs will thus be diverted from a UN-sponsored international conference and UN resolutions recognizing Palestinian self-determination and rejecting territorial acquisitions—the principle implying the evacuation of all occupied Arab land.

Shultz' initiative fails to meet these two fundamental Arab demands. All it has to offer is a provisional settlement and a ceremonial international framework to debate the future of the occupied Arab territory without a prior commitment to its evacuation and the inalienable, national rights of the Palestinian people.

But talking about a comprehensive settlement and other peace formulas neither addresses the core of the problem nor provides the requirements of a just, overall peace, which is out of character with Zionist occupation and terror, breaches of UN resolutions, and defiance of the overwhelming international will for a UN-sponsored conference.

Briefs

Ambassadors Appointed

The following new ambassadors were sworn in before President Hafiz al-Asad today. The ambassadors are 'Isam al-Na'ib, ambassador to the Soviet Union; Subhi Haddad, ambassador to the CSSR; Ahmad 'Isa, ambassador to Tunisia; Dr Ghasub al-Rifa'i, ambassador to Brazil; Dr Ahmad Saqr, ambassador to Poland; 'Abd al-Hasib al-Ustuwani, ambassador to Argentina; Dr Shahin Farah, ambassador to Greece; Miss Siba Nasir, ambassador to Belgium; 'Abd al-Karim al-Sabbagh, ambassador to Oman; and Yasir al-Farra, ambassador to the DPRK. [Summary] [*JN142134 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1915 GMT 14 Mar 88*]

Afghanistan

Election Council Membership Announced

LD172030 Kabul Domestic Service in Dari 1600 GMT 17 Mar 88

[Text] The President's Office reports that esteemed Najibullah, president of the Republic of Afghanistan, has approved Decree No 244, dated 17 Mar 88, in accordance with Article 19 of the Law on Elections for the Republic of Afghanistan National Assembly about the appointments to and composition of the central commission for the convocation of elections for the National Assembly.

Members of the central commission for the National Assembly are:

Abdurrahim Hatef, chairman of the NF of the Republic of Afghanistan, chairman;

Mir Saheb Karwal, representative of the PDPA, vice chairman;

Bashir Baghlani, representative of the Organization of Revolutionary Toilers of Afghanistan, vice chairman;

Dr Behzad, representative of the Organization of Toilers of Afghanistan, vice chairman;

'Abdul Hakim Tawana, representative of the Peasants Justice Party, vice chairman;

'Abdul Satar Sirat, representative of the Islamic Party of Afghanistan, vice chairman;

Nazar Muhammad Sarmand, secretary;

Nezamuddin Tahzib, president of the Supreme Court, member;

'Usman Rasekh, attorney general of the Republic of Afghanistan, member;

'Amanuddin Amin, deputy prime minister of the Republic of Afghanistan, member;

Hasan Sharq, deputy prime minister of the Republic of Afghanistan, member;

Bashir Baghlani, minister of justice, member;

Akbar Shormach, minister of nationality affairs, member;

Ne'matullah Pazhwak, minister counsellor, member;

Kabir Ranjbar, president's aide for assembly affairs, member;

Fazulhaq, in charge of the local organs of the PDPA Central Committee, member;

Muhammad Wakil, in charge of the organization department of the PDPA Central Committee, member;

Satar Pordeli, chairman of the DRA trade unions, member;

Ma'suma Esmati, chairman of the women's council, member;

Khoday Nur Bawar, chairman of the cooperatives union, member;

Mawlawi Manzur, chairman of the High Council of Ulema and Clergy, member;

Ghulam Sakhi Masun, chairman of the lawyers association, member;

Rozwanqul Tamana, chairman of the traders union, member;

Akram 'Usman, chairman of the writers' association, members;

Mir Habib Suhayli, chairman of the Central Council of Nationalities and Tribes, member;

Khadam Husayn Beg, chairman of the Central Council of Hazara Nationality, member;

Mahmud Habibi, from the Union of Journalists, member;

Nabi 'Azimi, first deputy minister of defense, member;

Sarawzawal, security deputy minister of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, member;

Yar Muhammad, first deputy minister of state security, member;

Sarwar Nemad, secretary of the DYOA, member;

Sayyed Rasul Fakur, vice chairman of the NF Central Council, member;

Sayyed Mansur Naderi, member of the Revolutionary Council, member;

Sarwar Nuristani, member;

Gangaram, national trader, member;

Rahmataqa Dehqan, from Andkhoy District, member;

'Azmuddin Dehqan, from Kabul Province, member;

Jan Gul, worker, member;

Sarjang Zaza'i, minister counsellor, member;

Shah 'Ali Akbar Shahrestani, member.

The Presidential Office has told BIA that nine sets of membership and one set of vice chairmen of the Central Commission for the Convocation of Elections to the National Assembly have been reserved for representatives of the opposition.

Security Forces Seize Rebel Missiles in Paktia

LD171757 Kabul Domestic Service in Pashto 1530 GMT 17 Mar 88

[Text] A satanic plan of the extremist elements designed to destroy the residential houses of the people in Sayd Karam District, Paktia Province, by firing surface-to-surface missiles, was detected and foiled by the security forces.

According to a BIA military correspondent's report, the inhabitants of Sayd Karam District, in consultation with the district's national reconciliation commission, informed the security forces in ths province about the existence of surface-to-surface missiles in their area.

As requested by the inhabitants and the national reconciliation commission of Sayd Karam District, the security forces of Paktia Province took action and seized 50 surface-to-surface missiles of the extremist elements in this region and destroyed the extremists' weapons depots and four of their hideouts.

Mujahidin To Request Full ICO Membership

BK171540 Hong Kong AFP in English 1522 GMT 17 Mar 88

[Text] Islamabad, March 17 (AFP)—An Afghan mujahidin delegation will leave shortly for Jordan to press for full membership of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC), resistance sources said Thursday.

The seven-party Afghan rebel alliance currently has observer status. The ICO expelled the pro-Soviet regime in Kabul in 1980.

Jordan hosts the 45-nation ICO foreign ministers meeting next week.

The rebel delegation, to be led by Mir Hamza of the Jamiyat-e Eslami group, will include representatives from all seven parties in the alliance.

It will seek ICO recognition of a rebel interim government announced in February and express mujahidin opposition to any moves to re-admit Kabul, the sources said.

Afghanistan Foreign Minister 'Abdul Wakil visited several Arab capitals last month in a bid to convince the Moslem world to restore its membership amid indications that Soviet troops would be withdrawn this year.

Mines Prevent Return of Khowst Residents

BK171746 Hong Kong AFP in English 1730 GMT 17 Mar 88

[Text] Peshawar, Pakistan, March 17 (AFP)—Some 12,000 Afghan families who fled as Soviet-Afghan forces fought to reopen a road to the garrison town of Khowst have been prevented from returning home by mines, two French aid workers said here Thursday.

"The mujahidin are waiting for the snow to melt before systematically beginning to clear houses of mines set by Soviet and Afghan troops" as they withdrew, Philippe Gautier told AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE.

A Soviet-Afghan force fought its way along the 120 kilometre (80 mile) road to Khowst from the capital of Paktia Province Gardez in December, reaching the garrison town besieged by the mujahidin for eight years in early January.

After resupplying Khowst the Soviet-Afghan forces withdrew a month later leaving the mujahidin in control of most of the road.

"We cannot go into the villages as the houses have been booby-trapped with anti-personnel mines," Mr. Gautier said. "According to Jallaludin Haqqani of the Hezb-e Eslami Khalis faction, more than 400 people have fallen victim to the mines," he added.

The anti-personnel mines are designed to maim rather than kill, taking off an arm or a foot, military experts say. Most casualties in the Afghan conflict have been caused by mines.

"There is no serious fighting in the region now except for around Urgun," a Soviet-Afghan garrison town south of Khowst besieged by the mujahidin, Mr. Gautier said.

"The rebels are expecting an attack around Urgun," he said, adding that Soviet and Afghan troops were trying to break up the mujahidin forces by rocket attack.

A Soviet-Afghan convoy from Kabul tried to reach Urgun at the end of last week but was prevented from doing so by rebel mines on the road from Ghazni, diplomatic sources said Tuesday in the Pakistan capital Islamabad.

Khowst has been considerably fortified, Mr. Gautier said, explaining that the defence perimeter had been extended to cover most of the surrounding plain. Government troops "had reinforced their security lines and built new (defence) posts," he added.

Mr. Gautier returned to Peshawar, the base for the main mujahidin groups, in northwestern Pakistan, after a visit to the region south of Khowst with Philippe Hamel of the Franco-Afghan Friendship Organisation. The two men handed over one million francs (176,000 U.S. dollars) to local people to buy food.

Their humanitarian mission from March 1 to 16 was organised by the Organization Coordination Humanitaire Europenne pour l'Afghanistan, whose members include Britain, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland.

India

Further on Successful Satellite Launch

BK171626 Delhi Domestic Service in English
1530 GMT 17 Mar 88

[Text] The country's first operational remote sensing satellite IRS-1A, which went into orbit today, has been successfully tracked by all the ground stations.

They are receiving telemetry data from the satellite. The spacecraft is now circling the earth over the poles at a height of 904 km, taking 103 minutes for each orbit.

An ISRO [Indian Space Research Organization] release says the two side-mounted solar panels automatically opened out soon after the launch. The panels are maintaining the temperature within the stipulated limits.

The indigenously built 975-kg satellite was shot into space following a magnificent launch by the Soviet Vostok rocket from the Baykonur Cosmodrome shortly after 1213 Indian Standard Time.

The launch was witnessed, among others, by the Indian ambassador to the Soviet Union, Mr T. N. Kaul, the chairman of the Indian Space Commission; Professor U.R. Rao; and the Glavkosmos chairman, Mr Aleksandr Dunayev. The satellite is to go through several post-launch maneuvers and is expected to take its scheduled slot in space in about a month's time.

The 65-crore-rupee IRS-1A is the heaviest satellite to be built by India. It is designed to operate for a minimum of 2 years and will fly over the same point of earth once in 22 days. The satellite carries three self-scanning cameras that will take pictures in four different colors.

The orbit of the satellite will be continuously adjusted to ensure that all imageries are taken everyday around 1025. The data collected by the satellite will be of immense use in agriculture, forestry, geology, and hydrology. Besides the earth station near Hyderabad, a set of five regional remote sensing service centers have been set up to receive images and data from the satellite.

The prime minister has described the successful launching of the satellite as a major milestone in India's remote sensing program. Making a statement in both the houses of parliament, Mr Rajiv Gandhi said India now becomes the fifth nation of the world after the United States, the Soviet Union, France, and Japan to have accomplished the remote sensing of the earth resources from space.

The prime minister's announcement of the successful launching was cheered by the members with the thumping of desks. He extended his heartiest congratulations to the team of scientists, engineers, and supporting staff, whose dedicated efforts over the last 5 years have brought this great success to the nation.

Envoy to Islamabad on Reopening Railway Link

BK180918 Delhi Domestic Service in English
0730 GMT 18 Mar 88

[Text] India has expressed its readiness to send a delegation to Pakistan for signing the protocol on reopening of the Khokhrapar-Munabao railway link.

The Indian ambassador in Islamabad, Mr S. K. Singh, told newsmen that the delegation can visit on dates convenient to Pakistan. Reacting to a statement made by the Pakistani Government in the country's National Assembly, Mr Singh said India did not delay in reoptning the second rail link.

Singapore's Prime Minister Seen Off by Gandhi

BK171255 Delhi Domestic Service in English
1230 GMT 17 Mar 88

[Text] The Singapore prime minister, Mr Lee Kuan Yew, left New Delhi this evening for Pakistan after a 3-day visit to India.

He was given a ceremonial send-off at the Rashtrapati Bhavan [President House]. Among those who were present on the occasion were the prime minister, Mr Rajiv Gandhi, some of his cabinet colleagues, and other high dignitaries.

Iran

Foreign Ministry Responds to UNSC Statement

LD181143 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian
1030 GMT 18 Mar 88

[Text] Our country's Foreign Ministry has issued a statement in reply to yesterday's statement by the president of the Security Council:

Referring to the fact that the United Nations, and particularly the Security Council, responsible for reacting against any aggression or violation of international regulations and conventions, and also specifying that they are dutybound to adopt effective and practical measures with regard to war crimes, the statement stipulates in part:

Unfortunately, 20 days after so many crimes by the Iraqi regime, the Security Council has refused to issue any kind of resolution and has confined itself to the release of a very weak statement.

Another part of the Foreign Ministry said: The unjustifiable performance of the Security Council strengthens the impression that the council is not worried about the war crimes committed by the aggressor regime of Iraq, nor is it worried about the violation of human rights. Rather, it is the clear military defeats of the Iraqi regime during the past few days which have worried the council.

The Foreign Ministry statement said: Iran has never had any desire to conduct a war of the cities; it only utilizes reprisal actions, limited to the level of deterrence in an attempt to defend its victimized nationals. While the Security Council must condemn the Iraqi regime for having started the new round of its crimes, the Islamic Republic of Iran will stop its retaliation as soon as the Iraqi regime stops its attacks on the residential regions of Iranian cities.

The Security Council must realize that no political solution will be debatable if the aggressor is not openly and explicitly declared and suitable punished.

WIH Chief on Iraqi 'Contradictory Statements'

NC181032 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 0430 GMT 18 Mar 88

[Text] Mr Kharrazi, the head of the WIH, has announced that the massive defeat of the criminal Iraqi Army in the "Val Fajr-10" operations has plunged the Iraqi regime into a state of confusion. As a result, it is uttering contradictory statements.

According to the Central News Unit, Mr Kharrazi, describing the contradictory utterances of the Iraqi regime, said:

On the one hand, the Iraqi regime declared yesterday that there are no troops stationed in the Halabjah, Dujaylah, and Khurmal areas and that it had evacuated its forces from the region a long time ago. On the other hand, it stated that Iraqi forces are in complete control of the operational region. Such contradictions prove that the Iraqi regime has suffered a major defeat on the battlefronts and in addition, it is facing a severe crisis in the political propaganda field.

The head of the WIH added: Simultaneous with these contradictory allegations, the Iraqi regime has since Wednesday [16 March] been engaging in chemical bombing and using cluster bombs against the residential areas of Khurmal, Dujaylah, Halabjah, and the surrounding villages, and thousands of residents of these areas have been killed or injured. The Iraqi regime now intends to destroy these cities so that, like Panjwin, nothing may fall intact into the hands of the Islamic forces.

Kharrazi continued: It is also interesting to note that, while the Iraqi regime claims that it did not have any troops in the region and has admitted that the cities of Halabjah, Khurmal, and Dujaylah have fallen, it alleges that the fighters of Islam are engaged in bombing and shooting in these cities. The Iraqi regime does not say what necessitates the bombing or shooting in the cities which have already fallen.

Furthermore, the residents were opponents of the Iraqi regime who sacrificed scores of martyrs to Islam some years ago in their uprising against the domination of the Ba'thist regime. The fact is that the Iraqi regime is wreaking vengeance on people who have joyously liberated themselves from Iraqi domination and who have enthusiastically welcomed the Islamic fighters.

He added: Moreover, the Islamic fighters have so far, during the "Val Fajr-10" operations, taken prisoner hundreds of enemy forces, including Major General 'Ubayd al-Aqawi, commander of the Iraqi 43d Division, and to date nearly 3,800 prisoners have been evacuated to the rear. This, in itself, is living proof of the baselessness of Iraq's claims and of the presence of Iraqi forces in the region.

Concluding his remarks to the Central News Unit, the head of the WIH said: The people of the liberated cities of Khurmal, Dujaylah, and Halabjah have witnessed the crimes of the Iraqi regime against them in the past few days. They have also seen that the Islamic fighters have not fired a single shot against them.

We will ask the International Red Cross to investigate the condition of the residents of these cities on the basis of international norms and in accordance with the responsibility entrusted to that organization.

Velayati Asks Red Cross To Condemn Iraq

LD172105 Tehran IRNA in English 2057 GMT 17 Mar 88

[Text] Tehran, March 17, IRNA—Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati cabled a message to head of the International Committee of the Red Cross [ICRC] Cornelio Sommaruga Wednesday calling on him to condemn the renewed Iraqi use of internationally-banned chemical weapons in newly-Iranian liberated areas inside Iraq.

The message also enumerated the crimes committed by the Iraqi Ba'thist regime since the start of its aggression on Iran in 1980, especially the ongoing enemy air and missile attacks on Iran's cities.

The Iraqi regime is impudently attacking residential areas, hospitals, schools and other educational centers with bombs, missiles and toxic gases in defiance of all international regulations, the message said. Iraq's Ba'thist rules regard these acts of savagery as part of their war policy, it added.

Now that Iran's Muslim combatants are trying to root out the cause of aggression, rescue the oppressed Iraqi Muslims and establish a lasting peace in the region, the Baghdad regime is vainly using chemical weapons in a large scale against the Iraqi border cities and civilian quarters in a bid to prevent its people from joining Iranian combatants, it said.

Without any doubt, noted the message, the countless crimes being committed by the Baghdad regime in the course of the Iraqi-imposed war, particularly its use of chemical weapons against the defenceless Iraqi Muslims are big crimes against humanity, and silence vis-a-vis such sinister phenomena is a severe blow on humanitarian ideals.

Elsewhere, in the message, Foreign Minister Velayati called on the ICRC head to immediately despatch an envoy to the areas liberated by Iran in the northeast of Iraq in order to file a report on the depth of the tragic Iraqi deployment of chemical weapons.

Larijani Comments on UN Mediation Efforts

LD061121 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 6 Mar 88

[Text] Mr Mohammad Javad Larijani, the economic and international affairs under secretary in the Foreign Ministry, outlined Iran's stand regarding Security Council Resolution No 598 and the UN secretary general's plan in a press conference this morning.

Referring to the UN secretary general's plan about the imposed war, Mr Larijani said: The Islamic Republic of Iran has accepted the secretary general's plan. We consider this plan practicable and positive. According to the plan, first the aggressor should be named, and then a reasonable and fair solution should be found. For the secretary general to implement his plan, we shall cooperate in every way.

Regarding rumors spread by arrogant media about Iran's acceptance of Resolution No 598, he said: Whenever our enemies wish to deceive the world, we reiterate our stand. If peace and security is really the aim of international organizations, the aggressor and the initiator of the war should be named. This is the demand of a nation which has been subjected to aggression.

Concerning the stand of the international organization on the matter, he said: In the Security Council there are countries for whom the implementation of the UN Charter is unimportant. They use that international body for their own purposes. America and Britain have committed acts which have jeopardized the reputation of that organization.

Referring to the plan for an arms embargo on Iran, he said: From a logical standpoint that plan is strange because it takes action against the one who has been subjected to aggression.

Tehran Radio Phone-in Program on War

LD051003 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1130 GMT 3 Mar 88

["In Line With the People, in Step With the Officials" phone-in program with Kamal Kharrazi, WIH supervisor; Mohammad Reza Sadr, deputy interior minister for political and social affairs; and Hoseyn Sheykh ol-Eslam, deputy foreign minister for political affairs; by unidentified moderator announcer]

[Excerpts] [Moderator] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. With greetings to the heroic and ever-present-on-the-scenes nation of Iran and with praise for the brave Islamic combatants we begin this week's program for the Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Last week thousands of mobilization volunteer forces left for the fronts to show the world that the war will not end without Saddam's downfall. Thus officers planning the war have been continuing the operations and dealing repeated effective blows at the body of the infidel regime of Iraq to attain the same objective.

The Ba'thist regime in Iraq, well aware of the undesirable state of its forces on the warfronts, has begun a new round of wicked acts in resuming the war of the cities, knowing full well that it cannot face our heroic combatants on the battlefields and that it has to compensate for its shortcomings and also prepare the political and publicity grounds for the adoption of a new Security Council resolution on an arms embargo against Iran.

This matter was formulated following talks by the rulers of Baghdad with David Mellor, minister of state of the British Foreign Office, and also a U.S. military and political delegation. The British minister of state, whose country has recently been active in the Persian Gulf to implement Washington's policies, predicted while in Bahrain last Sunday that the plan to impose an arms embargo against Iran would be approved within 2-3 weeks in the UN Security Council.

As representative of Britain and coordinator of the moves by the permanent members of the Security Council for the adoption of this resolution, Mellor pointed out the duties for the rulers of the Baghdad regime. He noted that the political and publicity grounds to persuade people for the need to adopt the Security Council resolution vis-a-vis the war were possible only in a crisis situation in the region and only if the situation could be depicted as unstable because of the war.

On this basis the rulers of Baghdad, trusting the words of the British minister of state, assumed that by resuming the war of cities in a short and tolerable period of time for Iraq they could easily prepare world opinion for

imposing peace on Iran and thus for controlling this military move to provoke public feeling against Iran for its intentions of ending the war on condition that the aggressor was named.

However, it must be noted that if the proviso for approving a new resolution is tantamount to the creation of an atmosphere of crisis in the region then the very same factor will be the most important reason for its defeat even before the new resolution is approved. Furthermore, this factor destroys any grounds for sound political moves in pursuance of the question of the war by political means.

The arrogant powers should be assured that any point approved by force, any pressure applied to guarantee support for the aggressor, and any disregard for the just rights of the Iranian nation are doomed to failure even before they are realized.

Another objective of the Ba'thist regime in Iraq in resuming the war of the cities could be to divert world opinion from the Islamic uprising of the Palestinian people, since the Zionists in recent months have not been able to tame the high tide of the uprising in spite of massacres, torture, and the most bestial crimes against the Palestinians, going as far as breaking the bones of more than 3,000 persons.

The Zionists particularly need a diversion because these acts have aroused world opinion against them. Therefore, the best way for them to divert public opinion is by bringing new headlines to the world press on telex lines around the globe in order to moderate the wrath of the people of the world over the crimes committed by the Zionists in Palestine.

It is not surprising that the regime, in Baghdad, as an unofficial ally of Israel, is attempting to resume the war of the cities in order to divert world opinion from the shocking Israeli crimes onto some other direction. The regime in Iraq, having access to missiles donated by Moscow, could and still can round all the centers of Zionist power anywhere inside the occupied territory of Palestine, but the contemporary world and particularly the Islamic nations are witnessing these missiles being aimed at the focal point of the world Islamic movement. The regime in Baghdad has the duty to act as Israel's frontline and to continue to serve Israel.

The fact that 'Arafat is taking a clear stand in support of the savage bombing of Iranian cities by the Baghdad regime is not at all surprising and proves that former analyses about the failure of 'Arafat and the traitorous faction of the PLO to repress and tame the Palestinian Islamic uprising have been correct and logical. These are shocking facts that nations need to comprehend fully.

These facts were necessary for understanding of the war, to prove the righteousness of Iran's stand, and to show the cooperation and allegiance of all the traitorous elements with global arrogance in quenching the rising flames of the Islamic movement throughout the world. We all know that time will reveal the truth about the imposed war; and the imposter who was formerly unmasked only by the experts is now being fully exposed to all nations and to the vigilant conscience of humanity. [passage omitted]

As you well know it has been some days since the Zionist regime in Iraq resumed the war of the cities and the destruction of nonmilitary areas as well as dragging in dust and blood the future blossoms of Iran. A number of guests will be talking to you about the very same matter.

At this moment we have Deputy Foreign Minister Sheykh ol-Eslam and Deputy Interior Minister Sadr to answer your questions about the enemy's recent wicked acts and the political and propaganda situation of our country in the world. [passage omitted]

I inform our dear listeners that Dr Kamal Kharrazi, WIH supervisor, has also joined our guests in the studio. [passage omitted] A sister listener has telephoned to ask what has been done to counter the recent evil deeds by the Zionist regime of Iraq, and Dr Kamal Kharrazi will talk to you about the issue.

[Kharrazi] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. You have heard and read reports of the rapid retaliatory measures by the Islamic combatants. We have responded in a fitting manner to the Iraqi misdeeds of attacking our residential quarters in proportion to their wickedness. Of course, if it continues our response will be intensified in proportion to their moves.

Our actions are all moves designed to deter the enemy from attacking more residential quarters, because we regard attacks against residential areas as unacceptable. This is why we never start attacks against Iraqi residential quarters except in some unavoidable cases and as a deterrent.

So, we must deliver our real response on the battlefronts and continue our holy defense against Iraq. The Iraqis' motive in committing such evil deeds is to obstruct us in that same holy defense. Thus our definite response must be to punish by dealing effective blows, god willing, to the aggressor who commits such crimes at a time when he is prepared to carry out its missions.

[Moderator] A listener has asked Mr Sheykh ol-Eslam: Are the missiles fired against the people Russian missiles, and what stand has the Foreign Ministry adopted in this regard?

[Sheykh ol-Eslam] The USSR ambassador was summoned to the Foreign Ministry yesterday. I repeat that this is not the first time U.S. policies were implemented against our honorable nation by Russian weapons. [passage omitted] As I speak to you now, Dezful is still

standing as the first line of defense in support of our fronts although it has been subjected to the onslaught of Russian weapons used to implement U.S. and Western policies against us.

The last time Tehran was bombed, you may remember, Ramadan, 2 years ago, Soviet MiG-25's were used. Our stand is clear. We have seen this sort of coordination before, and unfortunately we are witnessing the same now. We are hoping the USSR will provide us with an appropriate answer, otherwise I must say there may be an unexpected response by our nation as regards this crime. We heard the comments of his holiness the imam yesterday, all of which are points to bear in mind by the party that provides the arms. [passage omitted]

[Moderator] Dr Kharrazi, what is your opinion of the reaction by the Western media to the resumption of the war of cities by Iraq, and have they admitted to its resumption by Iraq?

[Kharrazi] The situation as it has happened has forced them to admit it. [passage omitted] So there were no doubts in the media that it was Iraq this time, as before, that began the war of cities. [passage omitted] The United States and British, as you know, clearly show prior knowledge about the event and had coordinated views about the plan. Furthermore, some actually support the action of the Iraqis. [passage omitted]

The Iraqis had prepared themselves for this recent action several weeks before the attacks when they declared that they had been exercising some moves. This is more proof that they had made prior arrangements and had coordinated their acts with the great powers including the United States, the USSR, and Britain. [passage omitted]

[Moderator] As your have heard, toward the end of the first part of the program our colleague talked to one of our listeners, who asked the state officials to tell the people more about the realities of the imposed war. In this connection Dr Kamal Kharrazi and also Deputy Interior Minister Sadr made a few remarks. We are now ready to hear the remarks of Deputy Foreign Minister Sheykh ol-Eslam.

[Sheykh ol-Eslam] Yes, I should like to say more about the fear of the superpowers about the slogans of this nation and the downfall of Saddam. There is a spiritual or psychological aspect to the question. They look around and see that his eminence the imam declared that the shah should go and he went.

The imam declared that Carter should go and he went. And now he is declaring that Saddam should go—God willing—he will go. They watch and realize that if this happens they will never be able to convince any puppet, either in our vicinity or elsewhere, to embark on aggression against the Islamic Republic.

This conflicts with the nature of the superpowers which can continue their existence only by our nonexistence. Our existence means their nonexistence in the long term. That is why they make every effort to preserve Saddam.

The other point which is an analytical look at the political situation of the region is that the downfall of Saddam means all that the superpowers and other powers have plotted in this region will not materialize. There are two currents in this region, two moving currents: the first is the question of compromising the Palestine issue and the other is the war. If one of these comes to an end before the other it will largely determine the fate of the other, that is, if we topple Saddam before the superpowers are able to compromise the Palestine issue, then the fate of the Palestine issue will largely be affected and influenced by the Muslims of the line of the imam of Palestine, Iran, and the region.

If—God forbid—they are able to bring to an end the issue of Palestine the downfall of Saddam will be much more difficult. That is why their policies are based on the premise that, whatever happens, they must delay the downfall of Saddam and promote the compromise of the Palestine issue. We see the various moves they carry out on the political scenes with different Palestinian leaders, with different leaders of the Arab world, to compromise the issue of Palestine. And we see what international, military and political efforts are being made by them to delay the downfall of Saddam.

For our part, our policies are exactly the opposite. That is, we have to make every effort to topple Saddam. We should support the fronts; we should make our attacks more crushing for the enemy; our resistance should intensify, and we should do everything we can to prevent the Palestine issue from being dragged into compromise.

What does this mean? It means that in Lebanon we should create problems for the Israelis, do the same inside Palestine, and on the international scene we should remove the basis on which the various compromise conferences over the Palestine issue function. Fortunately, we have been successful in this respect.

[Moderator] Thank you very much for your comments. Please allow me to ask you another question, Mr Sheykh ol-Eslam. What have been the reactions of the Security Council and the UN secretary general with regard to Iraq's resumption of the war of the cities?

[Sheykh ol-Eslam] Seriously, they ought to be ashamed. Despite the fact that the UN Charter and their duties require that they should react. Unfortunately we have not seen them making any constructive moves. If seems, just as my colleagues here have also commented, as if everything has gone into a political, military, international plan against this nation to prevent the downfall of Saddam, because it really amounts to this: We say that Saddam should go, and they want to keep Saddam.

This issue now is not one of defeating us, or of that kind of talk, or of toppling the Islamic Republic. We are mobilized. We have seen not the slightest effective activity on their part except a bit of propaganda and some crocodile tears. The U.S. State Department has also shed these crocodile tears. It too has condemned the attacks on the cities. But who does not know who has made the principle decision?

[Moderator] Dr Kharrazi, please let me ask another question. Kuwait has called for a halt to the war of cities. In view of the fact that Kuwait has demonstrated through the course of the imposed war that it is one of the firmest supporters of the Baghdad regime, what do you think this request means?

[Kharrazi] The reason for this request is political; that is, by this gesture it wants to pretend that it is doing something on the humane level, and that it is opposed to this business of striking at cities. Of course, Kuwait pretends that this is a humanitarian gesture, but since its officials are in line with the leaders of the Iraqi regime, nothing can be changed. The Iraqis believe that they will achieve something by these means and put pressure on us until we surrender. Evidently the Kuwaiti side also thinks along similar lines and will support this viewpoint of the Iraqis.

Really, what they are doing is a maneuver to say: we too want to do something humanitarian; we are really opposed to this war of cities. It is really they themselves who are paying for the Iraqis' weapons, which are then used against us. Indeed they spend approximately $2 million for each missile. Money from the shaykhs of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and so forth provides for the provision of these weapons. So all this is a pretence and a sop to the humanitarian platform.

[Moderator] Thank you very much. Please permit us to ask Mr Sadr a question. As you know, Saddam has hitherto repeatedly begun the war of cities and, after receiving slaps from the blow-for-blow actions of the Islamic combatants, he has given up his mischief. What is the main reason for his resumption of these wicked deeds this time? Why has Saddam chosen now to bomb the cities?

[Sadr] Yes, a good question. Of course, I and the rest of the brothers have elaborated on the general goals that were chiefly related to preventing the export of the revolution. However, in the present circumstances there is first the question of psychological warfare, which Dr Kharrazi also referred to. [passage omitted]

Psychological warfare is effective in those places where there is nothing that goes by the name of belief, faith, ideology; therefore, psychological warfare was one of Saddam's goals.

Yet, in relation to the timing, there are two specific issues: one of them is that the New Year [21 March 1988] is near; it is a time of festivities, holidays, and so forth. Saddam thought that he could profit from these times and advance his psychological aim in order to, for instance, demoralize the people by ruining their festivities. We had the same example in the past.

More important than this is the issue of the elections of the third term Majlis. [passage omitted] Saddam wants to influence and undermine the elections. He knows very well that elections have a special meaning in Iran; that is, they mean the participation of people in government and the provision of that government, and they mean determining all the elements that are effective in the country.

Our people are the most political people in the world. It is a government in which people have a role in the true sense of the word—the rule of people over people fully exists here. So, Saddam believes that if he can disturb the balance of society, the elections would be undermined, and people could not participate in the elections in the way they would or should.

However, our experience is exactly contrary to this. Our people have often shown that when circumstances are normal they may not perform their religious duties to the same degree; take for example the Friday prayers. When the situation is normal, the prayer sites are not very crowded. Yet when something abnormal is going on, we see the Friday prayer congregation double. These are the times when the people feel their responsibility and come to the arena.

The situation that we have now is exactly the same as we had on Jerusalem day sometime ago when Saddam threatened to bomb the ceremonies if people participated in the marches. And he did, of course, in some cities except Tehran. After that remarkable month of Ramadan, the eyes of the world were turned on Iran. This showed that we are truly a people who are at their best in times of danger, and that they appear on the scenes. [passage omitted]

[Unidentified caller] I am calling as a combatant and would like to ask if it is possible—of course, those who are in charge would know better than we—but, why do they not fire an additional 10 to 20 missiles and stop that murderer from breathing?

[Unidentified woman caller] Good day. I wanted you to ask a question on our part or (?broadcast it), I do not know, whatever you think best. (?In connection with) the blow-for-blow policy, (?it seems that) [words indistinct] that they have fired 20 missiles, but this was responded to with only 9 missiles. Why? Iran has missiles which we hear are more destructive. If Iran wants to (?turn Iraq) upside down then it can do just that. Why does it not do so? [words indistinct] what is the reason for this?

[Sadr] The problem now and the question of why they started the war now has to do with the despondency felt by the superpowers (?in the East and West). They have united; the so-called blasphemy and pagans have united, and they want to stifle this Islamic movement of Iran, which is spilling all over the world. Fortunately they cannot stiffle it. [passage omitted]

[Kharrazi] We have accepted the necessity of firing missiles and bombing. It is true that we hit certain targets and centers, but (?it is not certain) that we will hit exactly the right building, and naturally people will suffer losses. Why did we resort to this? Because we were forced to retaliate and prevent the enemy from continuing their actions.

Now, given this goal, we therefore have to observe limits. If we were to do something which would result in the people of Iraq suffering greater losses, more than is necessary, then this in itself would mean that we would be playing into Iraq's hands by doing as they do.

What I want to say is that we want to maintain a balance. We want to show that if Iraq fires a missile and causes some destruction, we too will cause an equal amount of destruction. We want to show that we also have strength in this area—we have the power to respond to Iraq exactly proportately and with the same type of weapons. The war at the battlefronts differs from the war of the cities; therefore, we should use as little justified force as possible to create a balance so that the enemy will regret continuing their mischief.

We have done this throughout the war of the cities, and we are doing the same thing in this latest phase. It is true that from the point of view of numbers, the Iraqis have fired more missiles—as of today, Iraq has fired 25 or 26 missiles at Tehran and Qom, and we have fired about 9 missiles. But (?we should not forget) that their destructive powers are equal; that is, the missiles that Iraq uses are one-third as destructive as those that we use. Therefore, from the point of view of an arms balance, (?we see that) there is parity—we have inflicted the same degree of destruction and loss as Iraq has.

What is important to us is the fact that Iraq is now using its missiles, and they do not have an unlimited supply; there is some limit after all. There will come a time that by preserving our strength we will gain the upper hand. If we did not really wish to respect and abide by ethical and humanitarian standards and desired to utilize all our resources, if this consideration did not exist, then we would naturally be much superior to the enemy. You can see how many of Iraq's cities lie within the range of our artillery; and it is very easy to use artillery.

We are manufacturing shells ourselves with no difficulty. Therefore, we can shell all of Iraq's cities 24 hours per day and fire a shell per minute. Not only can we hit Baghdad with missiles but also other cities. We can use the missiles that we are producing ourselves. We have increased their range, and we can use them and bring many of Iraq's cities into range.

Now, if things go that far and it becomes necessary for us to do this, then obviously the volume of our fire will be great. This would naturally inflict a lot of damage and destruction on the people of Iraq, but this is not our objective. Our aim is to deter the enemy in this matter. From the military standpoint we have maintained a balance—even though we have used fewer missiles, their destructive power matches that of the Iraqi missiles.

[Announcer] Thank you very much. [passage omitted]

[Moderator] Let me now raise a question sent by one of our listeners. He asks if there were any indications that Saddam had prepared in advance for the resumption of the war of the cities? Dr Kharrazi will make some comments on this issue.

[Kharrazi] There were many such indications. Beginning 5-6 months ago, when they announced that they had access to new missiles or had manufactured new missiles with a 650-km range, it was clear that they were hatching a plot. However, they wished to use these missiles, which they regarded as a superior weapon and a trump card, at an appropriate time so that they could achieve their aims. They regarded as an appropriate occasion the present time when the Security Council wishes to approve a new resolution against us. Before embarking on this they made many preparations for the implementation of this plan.

For instance, a few weeks before the start of the war of the cities, they announced that they wanted up hold exercises for the evacuation of Baghdad. Later, they announced that they held their exercises and had taught the people how they could leave the town in the shortest possible time. At the time, the exercise seemed rather strange. Why were they holding such an exercise? Our suspicions were strengthened that there was a new plot afoot.

Then there was the visit to Baghdad of Mr Mellor, minister of state of the British Foreign Office, and a U.S. delegation.

Finally, they started striking our targets. They attacked Tehran; they bombed the suburbs of Tehran; they attacked Saqqez. It was clear that they were starting their operations. It was also natural that we would respond, and that they would respond, so that the war of the cities would be started. This would allow them to use the weapons which they believed were their trump card, and to put pressure on us on the eve of the decision by the UN Security Council. After their attack on Saqqez, we hit economic and military targets in Basra.

However, they continued their attacks and bombed Hamadan and Dezful, and even said so officially. In the past when Iraq attacked a place, a city, they did not announce bombing the cities of Hamadan and Dezful.

Well, we could not fold our arms in the face of such actions by the enemy and remain silent. Therefore, we used the weapons in our possession, which were missiles, and fired one at Baghdad. They retaliated, and thus the war of the cities started. However, it was clear that Iraq started this. Even the international mass media could not deny this, declaring everywhere that Iraq launched those attacks on Tehran, Saqqez, Hamadan, and Dezful, and that Iran retaliated.

Iraq was presented as the side that started the attacks. Further proof that the Iraqis were the initiators is that they even made a few songs about their missile attacks. These songs show that they had made previous preparations, for songs need rehearsals, and the group should have rehearsals. They made and prepared some songs. I heard that they made three songs, and that they pride themselves on the fact they launched a missile attack on Tehran. This shows that they had even prepared themselves from the viewpoint of propaganda. [passage omitted]

[Moderator] Mr Sheykh ol-Eslam, after all these pressures and premediated arrangements, what is our position vis-a-vis the UN Security Council Resolution 598?

[Sheykh ol-Eslam] Our position has not changed at all. Our position is the same as we announced from the start. We do not accept this resolution, nor do we reject it. We do not accept it because it does not name the aggressor, or the punishment of the aggressor, or the payment of reparations to us. We do not reject it because it is much more balanced than the other Security Council resolution. I referred earlier to Resolution 479, which was issued by the Security Council at the beginning of the war.

Although Saddam had penetrated our territory in some areas by as much as 80 km, not only did Resolution 479 not call for a return to the previous borders, it did not even call for a cease-fire. However, this resolution is more balanced. It includes a mechanism which, if used properly, can name the aggressor. This is why we do not reject it; but we do not accept it either, and our positions have not changed at all. [passage omitted]

[Moderator] Mr Sadr, there is another question: Has the Interior Ministry any special views regarding the people leaving the cities?

[Sadr] A special view in the sense of a binding directive, no. We do not urge the people to leave the cities, nor do we urge them or force them to stay in the cities. It is natural that if there are people who have the conditions and facilities for staying it is much better for them to stay. However, it is possible that some people may be ill, and may find the existing conditions unbearable. Those people may leave the cities and there would no problem for them.

We have even taken some steps in this direction, that is, the Interior Ministry has issued an order to the governors general of the northern and eastern provinces for them to be prepared to receive guests who may be going to those provinces, especially since the New Year holidays will start soon. They should be prepared from the viewpoint of housing, food, security, and other facilities which they should place at the disposal of those guests. So there are no specific orders for the people to stay or to go. Of course, it is natural that if those who have the the conditions and the facilities to remain in Tehran, it would be much better if they do.

[Moderator] We have another question for Mr Sheykh ol-Eslam. Does your ministry hold any special views on the remarks of 'Arafat who has said that these savage attacks of the regime of Baghdad against residential areas are in line with the aspirations of the Arabs?

[Sheykh ol-Eslam] I am determined not to speak of the dead.

[Moderator] In that case, please let me raise another issue. What is the reaction of the Islamic Republic to Moscow's gift of missiles to Baghdad? I believe you spoke about it in the earlier part of your remarks. What is the explanation provided by the officials of that country?

[Sheykh ol-Eslam] As I have already said, the Soviet ambassador was summoned to the Foreign Ministry and we asked him to provide explanations. He is supposed to bring us some explanations, but he has not done this yet. In his last contact, he said he still has not received any explanations from his country's officials, and that he will come and give the explanations. Their preliminary response is that they know these missiles belong to them. No matter what explanation they may give, it is clear that these missiles are strategic weapons and could not have been used without their permission. They have the ability to prevent it.

The continuation of this action will certainly be with their approval, and they will be responsible for all the consequences of the issue. We are waiting for his response. And if we get the opportunity, we will inform the noble Iranian nation of his explanations. [passage omitted]

[Moderator] Mr Kharrazi, the Iraqi regime has claimed that these missiles are manufactured in Iraq. Do you believe this claim?

[Kharrazi] Well, you saw on television last night that some of the retrieved fragments of these missiles had Cyrillic script on them. There are other fragments on

which the Soviet Union's name, that is, the USSR, is written. It is quite obvious that these things are made in the Soviet Union. Basically, Iraq's technology is not so advanced for them to be able to manufacture such weapons.

If they had any sense they would have dismantled the missile to wipe out and erase these markings, first to prove their claim, and second to safeguard the Soviet Union's prestige. Instead, they have proved that they are liars and have also disgraced the Soviet Union by this act [passage omitted ansering another telephone inquiry from a member of public]

Missile Strikes, Ground Operations Continue

Halabjah Reportedly 'Liberated'

NC171624 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1620 GMT 17 Mar 88

[Unscheduled announcement]

[Text] "God is great, God is great, God is great." O heroic Iranian nation. O brave men of the land of martyrs. My sisters and brothers. The strategic city of Halabjah has been liberated.

4,000 Die in Chemical Bombing

LD171811 Tehran IRNA in English 1803 GMT 17 Mar 88

[Text] Val Fajr-10 Operational Region, March 17, IRNA—Some 4,000 residents of Halabjah were killed Wednesday when the defeated Ba'thist regime chemically bombed the then besieged Iraqi town, which was liberated tonight by the Muslim forces.

The Iraqi chemical bombardment also wounded thousands of other residents including children and women. The wounded are being evacuated to hospitals behind frontlines by the liberating forces.

Meanwhile thousands of Halabjah residents had walked towards Iranian borders braving the severe cold in order to escape the Iraqi regime's crimes. They were subsequently transferred behind the fronts by Iranian relief workers.

Khatem ol-Anbiya' Communique

LD171753 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1630 GMT 17 Mar 88

[Text] Khatem ol-Anbiya', the headquarters operation center for the IRGC and the Iranian Armed Forces, this evening issued a communique on the outcome of the third phase of the "Val Fajr-10" operation:

In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. Greetings and worship for the exalted God granting yet another victory to the Islamic forces, adding another gold leaf to the epic history of the resistant Muslim nation of Iran.

Islamic ummah of Iran and proud and pride-nurturing nation of Iran, the brave warrior fighters of this resistant nation relying on divine succor and His hidden armies [Jonud-e Makhfi-yas] continuing their holy defense and the third phase of the "Val-Fajr-10" operations, under heavy air bombing raids of chemical bombs succeeded in liberating the very important and strategic city of Halabjah in the Iraq's Al-Sulaymaniyah Province.

The long-standing wish of the Muslims of the innnocent Kurdish local people have now been realized. In the course of liberating the city, a number of villages in the region were also liberated. In all so far, the total number of liberated villages in the process of "Val-Fajr-10" operations has reached 102. The area of liberated land since the start of "Val-Fajr-10" following liberation of Halabjah exceeds 800 sq km.

In the course of liberating Halabjah, the valiant men of Basij [Mobilization of the Oppressed] and Jihad [Reconstruction Jihad], as well as the brave units of the IRGC Ground Forces and Navy and the proud Iranian airborne units and air forces inflicted further heavy losses and damage on the symbol of repression and crime in the region and dragged with might the criminal Ba'thist army into the dust of shame.

In the operations launched this afternoon, the Islamic fighters destroyed 100 percent of the 43d Division of the I Iraqi Army Corps, commando battalions of the 36th Division, tank [words indistinct] of the 39th Division, and Artillery Battalions 942 and 661. A further group of enemy units received serious losses in manpower and equipment.

Since the beginning of the "Val-Fajr-10" operations, over 8,000 enemy forces have been killed, and more than 3,400 Iraqi POW's have been evacuated to the rear.

The lofty and honorable nation of Iran, the battles of your warrior and brave sons against the defeated enemy still rages in the "Val-Fajr-10" operational zone. O exalted God, grant us the blessings bestowed on us and preserve the resolute will of the sons of this resistant ummah until the final victory over the criminal enemy is achieved. Maintain the blessed shadow of the commander in chief, the beloved Khomeyni, above the heads of this loyal ummah as ever.

[Signed] Khatem ol-Anbiya' Headquarters

Iraqis Hit School, Hospital

LD171715 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1630 GMT 17 Mar 88

[Text] The aggressor Iraqi regime, continuing its savage attacks against the residential areas of our cities, this afternoon once again made the cities of Bakhtaran, Dezful, and Azar Shahr the targets of its aerial attacks. Ten of our compatriots were martyred, a group of others wounded, and a number of houses damaged. An elementary school and a hospital were the targets in the attack on Bakhtaran.

IRGC Fires 20 Missiles at Basra

LD171855 Tehran IRNA in English 1828 GMT 17 Mar 88

[Text] Tehran, March 17, IRNA—Iraqi warplanes bombed Bakhtaran, Dezful, Azarshahr and Ilam today martyring 10 people and wounding a group of others. Several houses, a school and a hospital were damaged in the savage Iraqi raids.

Meanwhile, Ground Forces of the Islamic Revolution's Guards Corps (IRGC) fired 20 ground-to-ground missiles at industrial and military centers in the southern Iraqi city of Basra in retaliation for attacks on Iran's residential areas.

Iraqi Brigade 'Demolished'

LD171756 Tehran IRNA in English 1716 GMT 17 Mar 88

[Text] Val-Fajr 10, Operational Theatre, March 17,IRNA—Armoured Brigade 70 of the first Iraqi corps was completely demolished by Muslim combatants of Iran, said an operational commander here today.

In a talk with IRNA correspondent, the commander said the Islamic Revolution's Guards Corps' (IRGC) armoured units using advance T-72 tanks seized earlier from the enemy, heavily pounded Iraqi tanks in the "Val-Fajr-10" operational region today. He said the T-72 taks were seized by the Muslim combatants during the epic "Val-Fajr 8" operations which liberated the Iraqi port city of Al-Faw in February 1986.

Palls of smoke billowing skyward from the burning Iraqi tanks were clearly visible in the region. The Muslim combatants are checking all movements of enemy forces.

Communique No 3,144

LD171953 Tehran IRNA in English 1921 GMT 17 Mar 88

[Text] Tehran, March 17, IRNA—Iranian jet fighters heavily bombed economic and military centers of the Iraqi cities of Kuysanjaq and Al-'Amadiyah Thursday, inflicting substantial casualties and losses on the enemy, said a military communique here today.

The 3144th Joint Staff communique said that all fighters returned safely to bases after the bombing missions which took place at 08:06 and 11:16 hours local time (04:36 and 07:46 GMT).

Iranian fighter bombers also flew 32 sorties today in the "Val-Fajr-10" theatre, northeastern Iraq, heavily bombing Ba'thist positions and troop concentration sites and killing and wounding a large number of enemy soldiers. All aircraft returned safely to bases after carrying out their bombing missions successfully.

[redacted]warplanes were downed by anti-aircraft fire in [redacted] Wednesday and Thursday, three in Khurmal [redacted]rtheastern Iraq at 07:58, 08:11 and 11:16 am [redacted]41, 07:46 GMT), one in Tabriz, (E. Azarbay-[redacted]v.) at 10:48 am (07:18 GMT), one in Shiraz, (Fars Prov.) at 11-33 am (08:03 GMT) all today, while the other enemy warplane was blasted out of sky over the Persian Gulf at 16:31 pm (13:01 GMT) Wednesday.

As a reprisal for the ongoing enemy air and missile attacks on cities, Iranian long range artillery pounded economic and military centers of the Iraqi cities and towns of Basra, 'Ali al-Gharb, 'Ali Al-Sharqi, Al-Sulaymaniyah, Qal'at Dizah, Khanaqin, Banmil, Naft Khaneh and Mandali from 18:00 hrs Wednesday to 06:00 hrs Thursday. The enemy suffered considerable casualties and losses in Iran's retaliatory shelling.

Three Iranian medium-range surface-to-surface missiles were fired at military and economic centers of the Iraqi cities of Khanaqin and Basra Wednesday and Thursday.

Elsewhere on the battlefields, several Iranian military convoys infiltrated and ambushed Ba'thist positions in a southern war theater yesterday, killing at least 35 enemy soldiers and destroying 15 gun emplacements of theirs. They also took a number of POWS before safely safely [as received] to bases.

Iraqi warplanes chemically bombed the southern parts of Nowsud Thursday.

In Panjwin, northwestern sector, Iranian artillery fire suppressed an Iraqi patrol unit and destroyed several enemy vehicles in the Kani-Sheykh and Qasr-e Shirin fronts, western fronts Wednesday.

Movements of Iraqi motorized columns in Mandali and Naft-e Shah and enemy engineering operations in Nahr 'Anbar and Sharhani were also checked by Iranian artillery fire yesterday.

In the Strait of Hormuz Iran's naval gunboats intercepted and inspected eight cargo ships and oil tankers Wednesday but allowed them to continue voyage after making certain they were not carrying cargo for Iraq.

The Islamic Republic Air Force effectively carried out reconnaissance flights over the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman yesterday, providing aircover for the Navy.

Heavy anti-aircraft fire of Iranian naval forces prevented some enemy warplanes and helicopters from approaching Iran's Abu Musa and Farsi Islands and a oil platform in the Persian Gulf yesterday.

The communique added that on Wednesday Iraqi warplanes dropped chemical bombs on Qal'ehchi [placename as recieved] village near Marivan town, northwestern Iran and also on the northeastern Iraqi towns of Khurmal, Halabjah (since liberated) Diyalah and Sidasadeq [placename as received] in Al-Sulaymaniyah Province, wounding several people.

On Tuesday, Iraqi warplanes chemically bombed Iranian positions in the western part of the country, martyring and wounding a number of Muslim combatants, concluded the communique.

2 Iraqi Planes Downed

LD171623 Tehran IRNA in English 1605 GMT 17 Mar 88

[Text] Val-Fajr-10 Operational Theater, March 17, IRNA—Two Iraqi warplanes were shot down by anti-aircraft guns of the Muslim combatants here at 10:20 and 11:00 hours local time (6:50 and 7:30 GMT) today.

This brings to six the number of Iraqi warplanes so far downed in the region, since the start of the victorious operations in northeastern Iraq. No report is yet available on the fate of the planes' pilots.

Meanwhile an Iraqi plane was also shot down in the northwestern city of Tabriz this morning.

Iraqi Plane Downed, Pilot Captured

LD171848 Tehran IRNA in English 1834 GMT 17 Mar 88

[Text] Val Fajr-10 Operational Region, March 17, IRNA—Another Iraqi warplane was shot down here at 18:15 hours local time (14:45 GMT) today, bringing to seven the number of Iraqi planes downed in the region. The plane's pilot was captured by the Iranian combatants.

2 Iraqi Mirage Fighters Downed

LD180538 Tehran IRNA in English 0535 GMT 18 Mar 88

[Text] Tehran, March 18, IRNA—Iran's Air Force pilots, in a daring dogfight over the southern waters of the country, shot down and destroyed two invading Iraqi mirage fighters. The pilots of the enemy planes were also killed.

3d Iraqi Plane Downed Over Gulf

LD180935 Tehran IRNA in English 0925 GMT 18 Mar 88

[Text] Tehran, March 18, IRNA—Another Iraqi warplane was shot down in a dogfight with an Iranian jet fighter over the Persian Gulf at 09:32 hours local time (06:02 GMT) Friday. This brings to three the number of enemy planes downed over the Persian Gulf Friday.

All the three Iraqi warplanes were seen crashing into the Persian Gulf waters killing their pilots.

Nowsud Liberated

NC180726 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 0658 GMT 18 Mar 88

[Unscheduled announcement]

[Text] Truly we have granted Thee a manifest victory. [Koranic verse] O heroic Iranian nation! We wish to draw your attention to an important report from the "Val Fajr-10" operational sector. The courageous IRGC and the selfless Basijis of the IRGC Ground Forces have in the past few hours succeeded in completely liberating the border city of Nowsud, this dear city of the Islamic nation which has been under fire in the savage attacks of the 'Aflaqi Ba'thist regime for more than 7 years, and was used as a base by the counterrevolutionaries and hypocrites affiliated with the world oppressors in their nefarious schemes and designs against the tyrannized Muslims of Iranian Kurdistan.

The city has been rescued from the enemy's attacks in order to defeat the plotting enemies of this Islamic region. Remain triumphant, O proud ones of the victorious army of Islam.

2 Iraqi Towns Surrounded

LD180724 Tehran IRNA in English 0721 GMT 18 Mar 88

[Text] Operational Region, March 18, IRNA—Following liberation of the western Iranian border town of Nowsud, Iran's Muslim combatants liberated several villages on their way towards the Iraqi military towns of Tuwaylah and Biyar. Iranian forces by joining their fellow combatants over the heights west of Tuwaylah and Biyar towns have completely surrounded the two towns.

2 Iraqi Towns Liberated

LD180755 Tehran IRNA in English 0742 GMT 18 Mar 88

[Text] Operational Region, March 18, IRNA—Iranian combatants liberated two Iraqi military towns of Tuwaylah and Biyar Friday.

During the operations over 700 Ba'thist soldiers were killed and wounded and 200 others taken prisoner. In the course of these operations, seven more villages were liberated by the Muslim combatants, bringing to over 850 sq. kms the total area liberated so far.

Air Force Bombs Irbil, Al-Mawsil

LD180716 Tehran IRNA in English 0640 GMT 18 Mar 88

[Text] Tehran, March 18 IRNA—Iran's Air Force fighters heavily pounded enemy eco-military installations in the Iraqi cities of Irbil and Al-Mawsil at 18:49 hours (15:19 GMT) Thursday and 06:00 hours (02:30 GMT) Friday, inflicting heavy casualties and losses. All Iranian planes returned to bases safely.

The attacks were in retaliation for Thursday's enemy raid on the city of Azarshahr, in east Azarbayjan Prov. as a result of which a number of civilians were martyred and wounded.

2 Missiles Fired at Al-Mawsil

LD181233 Tehran IRNA in English 1220 GMT 18 Mar 88

[Text] Tehran, March 18, IRNA—Two surface-to-surface missiles were fired into military-industrial installations in Al-Mawsil, at 13:30 and 13:32 hours local time (10:00 and 10:02 GMT) Friday, inflicting substantial damage on property.

The General Headquarters of the Islamic Revolution's Guards Corps (IRGC) said the missiles fired by missile units of the IRGC's Air Force were in retaliation for earlier Iraqi attacks on Iranian civilian areas.

24 Missiles Fired at Iraq

LD180750 Tehran IRNA in English 0739 GMT 18 Mar 88

[Text] Tehran, March 18, IRNA—Twenty-four Iranian medium-range surface-to-surface missiles were fired at power station, oil refinery, airport and water and electricity departments in the Iraqi towns of Al-Zubayr, Al-Harithah and Shobair [placename as received] Friday morning.

The missiles were fired by the missile unit of the Air Force of the Islamic Revolution's Guards Corps (IRGC) in revenge for the ongoing Iraqi air and missile attacks on Iran's cities.

Meanwhile, Iranian Muslim forces in continuation of their deterrent measures heavily pounded the radio-T.V. station of Basra and eco-military centers of Al-Hujeh [placename as received], Al-Qurnah and Qal'at Salih with long range artillery.

Air Force Bombing Missions

NC180755 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 0726 GMT 18 Mar 88

[Unscheduled announcement]

[Text] Esteemed compatriots, the swiftly flying pilots of the Islamic Republic of Iran's Air Force, continuing their crushing operations against the decrepit enemy forces, have snatched all peace from the Saddamist forces by bombing them.

According to the Joint Staff Command of the Islamic Republic of Iran's Armed Forces, the strong-hearted pilots of the Air Force of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in their 73d mission in the "Val Fajr-10" operations, carried out sorties with their fighter-bombers at 0810, 0840, and 0920, [0440, 0510, and 0550 GMT] today, bombing the enemy's concentrations and army equipment in the "Val Fajr-10" operational sector. All returned safely to their bases.

4 Missiles Fired at Iraq

LD181122 Tehran IRNA in English 1112 GMT 18 Mar 88

[Text] Tehran, March 18, IRNA—Four Iranian surface-to-surface missiles were fired at economic and military centers of the Iraqi cities and towns of Basra, Khanaqin and Banmil from 18:00 pm. (14:30 GMT) Thursday to 06:00 a.m. (02:30 G. T) Friday.

Announcing the above, a Joint Staff communique said that Iranian jet fighters flew eight combat sorties today, heavily bombing Iraqi positions and troop concentration sites in the "Val-Fajr-10" operational theater in northeastern Iraq.

The fighters returned safely to bases after successfully carrying out the bombing missions which occurred at 07:45, 09:50, 09:55, 10:25, 10:35, 10:55, 11:03 and 11:15 hours local time (04:15, 06:20, 06:25, 06:55, 07:05, 07:25, 07:33 and 07:45 GMT).

As a reprisal against yesterday's Iraqi air attack on the northwestern Iranian city of Azar Shahr, Iranian fighter bombers heavily pounded economic and military centers of the Iraqi cities of Irbil and Al-Mawsil at 18:49 pm. (15:19 GMT) Thursday and again at 06:10 am. (02:40 GMT) Friday.

The fighters returned safely to bases after scoring accurate and destructive strucks at the enemy targets.

Tehran Hit by Missiles

LD181006 Tehran IRNA in English 0959 GMT 18 Mar 88

[Text] Tehran, March 18, IRNA—Residential areas in Tehran were struck by several Iraqi missiles Friday. According to early reports, a child was martyred and a number of others including some children were wounded in the criminal enemy missile attacks.

Meanwhile, Iraqi warplanes bombed civilians quarter of the Iranian cities of Shiraz, Andimeshk, Dezful, Zanjan and Bakhtaran Thursday and Friday, martyring and wounding several people. Some houses were also damaged in the enemy bombings.

3 Tankers Hit by Gunboats

NC181307 Paris AFP in English 1256 GMT 18 Mar 88

[Excerpt] Manama, March 18 (AFP)—The Iran-Iraq war raged Friday in the cities, on the ground front and in the Gulf, where shipping sources said gunboat attacks on three tankers killed a Japanese sailor and injured nine South Korean crewmen.

Cargo supervisor Shizuo Niinoi, 46, died in a Dubayy hospital after a gunboat [words indistinct] carrying a cargo of highly flammable liquified petroleum gas, said officials at the firm that chartered the vessel, Kyowa Marine Transportation Co. of Tokyo. Nine of the small tanker's 19 South Korean crewmen were injured in the midnight (2000 GMT Thursday) attack, which closely resembled other raids blamed on Iranian Revolutionary Guards naval units.

The insurers Lloyd's of London said the engine room and living quarters of the ship burst into flames when gas tanks were hit. Two tugs later put out the fire.

Less than nine hours later, Iranian [words indistinct] 284,000-ton Norwegian tanker "Berge Lord" in the Strait of Hormuz, inflicting only slight damage but there were no injuries, Gulf shipping sources said. The empty tanker continued unassisted toward the United Arab Emirates port of Dubayy.

At noon, Iranian gunboats fired missiles at a third tanker, the 51,894-ton Singapore-registered "Neptune Subaru" just west of the strait, Lloyd's reported. The tanker, owned by Singapore Neptune Orient Lines Ltd. requested no assistance, the insurers said, an apparent indication that it did not sustain serious damage. [passage omitted]

Khatem ol-Anbiya' Communique

LD181335 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 18 Mar 88

[Text] A communique of the Khatem ol-Anbiya' headquarters,the center for directing operations of the IRGC and the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI), on the fourth phase of epic-making "Val-Fajr-10" operations was released today as follows:

In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. Muhammad, the apostle of God, and his followers are harsh with infidels and kind with each other! O ummah of Islam! O noble and proud nation of Iran! In continuation of your unprecedented heroic steadfastness and thanks to your enemy-crushing, raise your cry "God is great!"

Your faithful and martyrdom-seeking sons, O zealous and great nation, continued with all their might and strength the third phase of the victorious "Val-Farj-10" operations at midnight last night by launching an attack on positions of the criminal enemy, with Almighty succor and his continuous mercy beginning the fourth phase of these great operations with the chant "God is great."

In this phase of the operations, the devoted mobilization forces and courageous IRGC fighters, after consolidating their positions in the liberated regions captured in earlier phases of the "Val-Farj-10" operations, succeeded in liberating the border town of Nowsud. This Kurdish-inhabited town of the Islamic homeland has been under barbaric fire of the filthy regime of Iraq for more than 7 years. The Baghdad rulers had reserved it as a base for the counterrevolutionaries and the hypocrites affiliated with global arrogance. This town is now out of the enemy's firing range and the conspiring enemies of this Islamic realm have been crushed.

Thanks to the liberation of Nowsud and the Iraqi military towns of Tuwaylah and (Biara), near the border strip—these two towns and more than eight villages around them were liberated after collapse of last-ditch efforts of the disintegrating units of the Ba'th army in the region in the hand of the epic-makers of monotheism corps—and after Khurmal, Dujaylah, and Halabjah, the flag of Islam was hoisted over Tuwaylah and (Biara) and these regions also became saturated with the scent of the flower of freedom, bringing to more than 900 square km the total area liberated.

During this phase of the glorious "Val-Farj-10" operations, as in previous phases, the fighters enjoyed the operational and logistic support of the selfless pilots of the Airborne Division and the Iranian Air Force, of the devoted brothers of the combat-engineering units of the Reconstruction Jihad, and of the IRGC Ground Forces. In this phase of the operations, more than 1,000 enemy troops were either killed or wounded, and 400 more of them were taken prisoner by the warriors of Islam,

bringing to more than 9,200 the total number of the enemy POW's taken behind the lines since the start of the "Val-Farj-10" operations.

Other gains in this phase of the operations were the destruction of dozens of tanks and personnel carriers of Iraq's criminal army, as well as the capture of a considerable quanitity of the enemy's medium- and heavy-weight equipment, bringing to more than 700 the total number of enemy tanks taken intact as booty since the start of the operations. [brief break in transmission] The task of collecting and transferring more than 2,000 vehicles taken intact as booty is continuing in an area of more than 1,000 square km in the operational theater.

O God, we are grateful to you for blessing this steadfast and resistant ummah once again, and for granting another success to our dear fighters to serve Islam more! [brief break in transmission] O God, help us to guard Islam and the Islamic homeland of Iran! O God, prolong the life of the leader of the world's oppressed and commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces, Imam Khomeyni, to bring Islam's victory against global blasphemy under the observation of the Lord of the Era, may God hasten his lofty advent! We are assisted by God and our victory is nigh. Give this glad tiding to the believers. [Koranic verse]

[Signed] Khatem ol-Anbiya' Headquarters

KDP Statement on Chemical Bombs

NC180946 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 0430 GMT 18 Mar 88

[Text] The KDP of Iraqi Kurdistan has issued a statement declaring that the fascist Iraqi regime subjected the populous city of Halabjah and the encampments around it to bombing with phosphorous and cluster bombs, thus martyring or wounding a large number of innocent Kurdish people. The KDP of Iraqi Kurdistan has called on all international organizations, particularly the International Red Cross, to hasten to the assistance of the tyrannized Kurds, condemn the criminal Saddam regime, and exert pressure on it to refrain from its bestial and inhuman acts.

Captured Iraqi Officers Comment on Tactics

LD172221 Tehran IRNA in English 2145 GMT 17 Mar 88

[Text] Val-Fajr-10 Operational Region, March 17, IRNA—Transfer behind the frontlines of Iraqi POWS taken captive in the victorious "Val-Fajr-10" operations still continues. There are many senior officers and commanders of units among the POWS, whose total according to latest reports stands at 3,500.

POW Lt. Colonel Taha 'Abd al-Rahman Mustafa commander of Second Battalion of Brigade 68 of special Iraqi forces described Muslim forces' military tactics in the "Val-Fajr-10" operations as 'unique'.

The commander taken prisoner in the second phase of the said operations said that a day before his capture Iranian forces stormed Iraqi troops. "We tried to withdraw but found ourselves hopelessly besieged from the rear," he went on.

The POW said that all forces under his command were either killed or taken captive.

On Saddam Husayn's objective for resuming the so-called war of the cities and its continuation, he said the major motive of the Ba'thist regime was to dissuade Iranian forces from launching any operations. But, he added, on the contrary the Iranian forces not only did launch operations but are avenging the blood of civilians martyred in the brutal Iraqi air and missile attacks.

Another ranking POW, commander of First Battalion of Iraqi Commando Brigade 68 of special forces, Lt. Colonel Nabil Nazir Yunis [name as received], said that areas liberated in the current operations are among the strategic zones in Al-Sulaymaniyah Province. The region, he added, is of special importance from both the military and political points of view.

On the operations, the colonel said heavy fire of Iranian forces completely stunned Iraqi forces and they had no chance of even a retreat. "All forces under my command were either killed or captured," he said.

Expressing relief on ridding himself of Saddam's tyranny, Colonel Yunis said many Iraqi commanders and troops are awaiting a suitable opportunity either to flee the war fronts or seek refuge in Iran, but the fear of Ba'thist mercenaries torturing and executing their families, remains all-embracing.

Commander of Third Battalion of Brigade 443 of Iraqi Army described the "Val-Fajr-10" operations as 'very rapid and lightning'. Introducing himself as Reserve Major Munir Hashim Hadi [name as received] he disclosed that university students and other Iraqi people are savagely repressed by the Ba'th Party's elaborate security network and any move against the ruling regime means automatic [words indistinct]. The reserve major is a graduate in Arabic literature from Mosul University.

On the U.N. Security Council's stance towards the Iraqi-imposed war, the POW said Baghdad-Washington relations had improved after the start of the war. The U.S. is increasing its influence on Iraq day by day, he added. On the other hand, the Soviets feed Iraq's arsenal, he said, adding "therefore, the Security Council which is under the influence of the two superpowers, is unable to take any stance against the Iraqi regime."

The major who hails from Baghdad said Saddam resumed the war of the cities, but not only he could not check any movement on the fronts [as received] but on the contrary the tension in the Iraqi capital itself has considerably increased, because of the current events.

Another POW, 2d Lieutenant Muhammad Ahmad Mahmud [name as received] of Iraq's division 18 said Iranian forces' fire was so severe that Iraqi troops had only time to leave their tanks and submit to Muslim combatants.

Pakistan

Afghan 'Agent' Arrested for Planting Bomb

BK181130 Hong Kong AFP in English 1110 GMT 18 Mar 88

[Text] Islamabad, March 18 (AFP)—An agent of the Afghan secret police has been arrested here for planting a powerful bomb in a crowded bus station, a police source said here Friday.

Sadiq Hussain was arrested Thursday after depositing the bomb at Pir Widhai, a bus terminal in the center of Rawalpindi, about 20 kilometers (12.4 miles) from here, police said.

The delayed-fuse bomb, which local experts said was Soviet-made, was defused several minutes before it was set to explode.

Mr. Hussain, who confessed to being an agent of the Soviet-backed Kabul government's secret police, the KHAD, was to have received 200,000 rupees (11,370 dollars) for his work, police said. He had already received an advance of 30,000 rupees (1,705 dollars), police said.

Mr. Hussain, who carried the explosives in a travel bag, was arrested shortly after depositing it in the crowded hall of the station.

A young shoe polisher, Zurab Gul, noticed his "bizarre" behaviour and alerted a police security officer, the local press said Friday.

More than 500 people have been killed in Pakistan in one year in attacks organized by Kabul's secret service, Pakistani authorities said. Several bomb planters have been arrested by Pakistani police over the last few months.

Government Desires To Improve Ties With India

BK161557 Islamabad Domestic Service in Urdu 1500 GMT 16 Mar 88

[Excerpt] The National Assembly was informed [today] that Pakistan desires to improve relations with India on a bilateral basis.

This was conveyed by Minister of State for Interior Raja Nadir Parvez and Minister of State for Defense Rana Naim Mahmud while speaking on adjournment motions seeking a debate on remarks by Indian Minister of State Natwar Singh in which he accused Pakistan of delaying the opening of the Khokhrapar-Munabao route between the two countries.

The minister of state for interior told the House that an Indian railway delegation that was due to visit Pakistan last September to finalize these arrangements did not come.

He said Pakistan is still awaiting the Indian delegation's visit in order to finalize the date for opening the route and other arrangements. The minister of state referred to President Mohammad Ziaul Haq and Prime Minister Mohammad Khan Junejo's assurances and Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's statement on continuing the dialogue for good-neighborly relations between the two countries.

He said the question of opening the Khokhrapar-Munabao route is one of the issues that needs to be settled through bilateral talks. [passage omitted]

Reportage on Visit of PRC Economic Official

Meets State Defense Minister

BK160537 Islamabad Overseas Service in Urdu 0500 GMT 16 Mar 88

[Text] The Chinese economic delegation led by Liu Xuejian, the vice minister for foreign economic relations and trade, met the minister of state for defense, Rana Naim Mahmud Khan, in Islamabad yesterday.

They discussed matters of mutual interest, especially cooperation in the field of defense production. They also reviewed the pace of work on various joint venture projects now under construction.

Holds Cooperation Talks

BK170700 Islamabad Domestic Service in Urdu 0200 GMT 17 Mar 88

[Text] At a meeting between the federal minister for finance and economic affairs and the high-level Chinese delegation in Islamabad, views were exchanged on measures to improve economic cooperation.

The Chinese deputy minister for foreign economic relations and leader of the delegation, Liu Xiejian, said his country wants to help Pakistan in the implementation of the integrated mineral project [word indistinct] in Baluchistan.

The finance minister proposed that China provide loans for the the machinery and tools for the project. At the meeting, the utilization of 100 million Chinese yuan were also discussed.

The members of the Chinese delegation also called on the production minister, Retired Major General Mohammad Bashir Khan, and exchanged views on matters pertaining to the exchange of technical experts and provision of ways for increasing cooperation.

Senate Chairman Joins Ruling Muslim League

BK161604 Islamabad Domestic Service in Urdu 1500 GMT 16 Mar 88

[Text] The Senate chairman, Ghulam Ishaq Khan, has announced his decision to join the Pakistan Muslim League [PML]. Prime Minister Mohammad Khan Junejo, who is also the president of the PML, has welcomed Ghulam Ishaq Khan's joining the party.

Sri Lanka

Tamil Rebels Massacre 13 in Eastern Province

BK180412 Hong Kong AFP in English 0407 GMT 18 Mar 88

[Text] Colombo, March 18 (AFP)—Tamil rebels have massacred 13 people in Sri Lanka's troubled Eastern Province, a military spokesman said here Friday.

Some 20 guerrillas of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) attacked a village outside the province's Digavapiya town late Thursday and hacked 13 civilians to death, the spokesman said.

All the victims, who included two girls and four women, were Sinhalese, the majority community in the island.

Eight people were wounded in the attack and taken to a hospital in Ampara District, the spokesman said.

No more details were immediately available.

The LTTE is the dominant separatist group in Sri Lanka and has rejected an Indo-Sri Lankan accord aimed at ending separatist violence on the island.

Reportage on Anti-LTTE Combat Activities

8 'Terrorists' Killed

BK161358 Colombo LANKA PUWATH in English 1345 GMT 16 Mar 88

["OANA/pool" item]

[Text] Eight LTTE terrorists were killed this morning by Sri Lankan security forces at Kuranjankulam in Sri Lanka's eastern sector district of Trincomalee.

Official sources told LANKA PUWATH that Sri Lanka's security forces had been alerted by the villagers that they were to be attacked by a gang of LTTE terrorists.

A soldier of the Sri Lankan Army succumbed to his injuries in the shootout. The Sri Lankan security forces seized one AK-47 rifle, one G-3 rifle and two sets of pouches [as received].

16 LTTE Men Killed

BK161558 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 16 Mar 88

[Text] In Sri lanka, 16 LTTE men were killed in northern Mulaittivu District in a series of encounters with PKF since yesterday.

Of them 11 were killed in Mankulam area, while 5 others died in exchange of fire in other areas of the district. At least three members of the LTTE were apprehended.

In Trincomalee, two PKF jawans [soldiers] were killed and four others injured when a landmine struck the PKF while they were on search operations.

5 Killed, 13 Injured

BK180351 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0240 GMT 18 Mar 88

[Text] At least 5 LTTE men were killed and 13 others injured since Wednesday [16 March] as the peacekeeping force continued its operations against the militants in Vavuniya, Kilinochchi, and Elephant Pass areas of northern Sri Lanka.

An official spokesman told newsmen in New Delhi yesterday that five militants were killed and eight wounded near Mankulam. Five LTTE cadres were wounded in another incident near (Pappakkudanto). Twelve LTTE activists were also apprehended in Vavuniya.

Army To Take Part in Anti-Rebel Operations

BK171244 Colombo International Service in English 1045 GMT 17 Mar 88

[Text] The TIMES OF INDIA said today that Indian and Sri Lankan officials agreed during talks [in New Delhi on 16 March] to selectively involve the island's Army in anti-rebel operations centered on the Northern and Eastern Provinces.

It said that Sri Lankan troops would also be involved in protecting refugees who have fled their homes because of violence.

Government officials and military spokesmen were not immediately available to confirm the report.

The lands and land development minister, Gamini Dissanayake, held discussions with Indian Government leaders on the situation in the island. The TIMES said the agreement to involve the Sri Lankan Army was reached at the talks with Indian Minister of State for External Affairs Natwar Singh and defense Minister K.C. Pant.

Mr Dissanayake is due to return today.